



Ōoku

● THE INNER CHAMBERS

by Fumi Yoshinaga

PARENTAL ADVISORY
EXPLICIT
CONTENT

7



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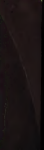
THE INNER CHAMBERS

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EXPLICIT
CONTENT

VOL. 7







GENOBU'S HEIR IS STILL JUST A CHILD, and with few official functions to perform, the men of the Inner Chamber find themselves with much time on their hands. Some find ways to make the most of their rare trips outside the palace, while others turn their minds to bloody intrigue...



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Ōoku
■ THE OTHER CONCUBINE



Although it is often referred to as peaceful, the mid Edo period was actually a quite blood thirsty time.





'TIS SAID LORD YOSHIMUNE HATH PLANTED AGENTS THROUGHOUT THE LAND TO REPORT ON THE INNER WORKINGS OF THE DOMAINS. DEEP INSIDE SDO CASTLE WE MAY BE, BUT THE LITMOST CARE MUST—

B-BARON MANABE! S-SPEAK NOT THUS!

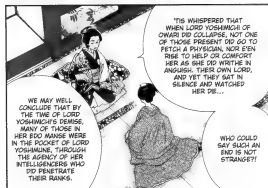
NO MATTER. IF THERE BE SPIES LISTENING, LET THEM HEAR WHAT I HAVE TO SAY!



...!!



Tokugawa Yoshimichi, fourth lord of the Owari domain, vomited copious amounts of blood after dinner one day, and died in agony.



WE MAY WELL CONCLUDE THAT BY THE TIME OF LORD YOSHIMICHI'S DEMISE, MANY OF THOSE IN HER SDO MANSE WERE IN THE POCKET OF LORD YOSHIMUNE, THROUGH THE AGENCY OF HER INTELLIGENCERS WHO DID PENETRATE THEIR RANKS.

'TIS WHISPERED THAT WHEN LORD YOSHIMICHI OF OWARI DID COLLAPSE, NOT ONE OF THOSE PRESENT DID GO TO FETCH A PHYSICIAN, NOR E'EN RISE TO HELP OR COMFORT HER AS SHE DID WRITHE IN ANGUISH. THEIR OWN LORD, AND YET THEY SAT IN SILENCE AND WATCHED HER DIE...

WHO COULD SAY SUCH AN END IS NOT STRANGE?!



HAVE YOU HEARD THE TIDINGS?! ABOUT LORD TOKUGAWA YOSHIMICHI?!

BARON MANABE!



BUT FIVE AND TWENTY YEARS OF AGE, WITH NO AILMENTS... LORD YOSHIMICHI WAS TOO YOUNG AND ROBUST TO DIE SO SUDDENLY. 'TIS CERTAIN SHE WAS MURDERED.

BY TOKUGAWA YOSHIMUNE, LORD OF THE KII DOMAIN, NO DOUBT!

AYE, INDEED I HAVE, MISTRESS HAKUSEKI.

EVEN THAT THRUSTING YANAGISAWA YOSHIYASU HAD THE GRACE TO RETIRE UPON THE DEATH OF LORD TSUNAYOSHI, BUT THOSE TWO, MANABE AKIFUSA AND ARAI HAKUSEKI... AS PROTECTORS OF THEIR LORD'S DAUGHTER THE CHILD SHOGUN, THEY REMAIN FIRMLY ENSCONCED IN THE HALLS OF POWER.

Most of the Senior Councillors at this time had, in fact, been serving in their posts since the reign of the fifth shogun, Tsunayoshi.

NOT FOR MUCH LONGER, I DARE SAY... WITH THE DEATH OF LORD YOSHIMICHI, THERE IS BUT ONE CANDIDATE LEFT IN THE SUCCESSION CONTEST, AND THAT IS THE ONE WE HAVE BEEN PUSHING FOR ALL ALONG—LORD YOSHIMUNE OF KEI! AND IN THE INNER CHAMBERS AS WELL, WE HAVE THE SUPPORT OF THE DOWAGER LORD CONSORT, SIR TEN'EI-NI!

OUR PRESENT LIEGE IS BUT A SICKLY CHILD JUST FOUR YEARS OF AGE, BUT FOR THAT REASON ALL THE MORE, HER PRIVY COUNCILLOR MANABE AKIFUSA THE BARON OF ECHZEN DOETH WIELD MUCH INFLUENCE IN THIS CASTLE. WE OUGHT NOT DISCOUNT HER POWER.

HMM, I DO WONDER IF 'T'WILL HAPPEN SO EASILY.

...IS A MOST DREAD PERSONAGE INDEED, JUST TWENTY YEARS OF AGE, YET ALREADY SHE HATH DONE AWAY WITH HER RIVAL FOR THE TITLE OF SHOGUN, IN A MOST FINAL MANNER...

LORD YOSHIMUNE OF THE KEI DOMAIN...

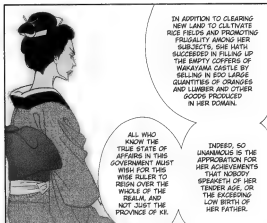
LORD YOSHIMICHI MAY BE DEAD, BUT THE OWARI LINEAGE DOETH CONTINUE IN THE BLOOD OF HER BROTHER, LORD TETSUTOMO. OUR DUTY THEREFORE IS TO IMPRESS UPON THE SENIOR COUNCILLORS THAT THE HOUSE OF OWARI BE THE FIRST AMONG THE THREE BRANCHES OF THE TOKUGAWA CLAN, NOTHING LESS!

'T'WAS BUT LUCK THAT SHE DID MANAGE TO TURN AROUND THE FISCAL STATE OF HER RUSTIC LITTLE DOMAIN—AND NOW, IN CONSEQUENCE, SHE DOETH DARE TO COVET THE SHOGUN'S SEAT. WHAT OUTRAGEOUS IMPUDENCE!

OUR DEAR, DEPARTED LORD IENOBU DID TELL ME MOST CLEARLY THAT LORD YOSHIMICHI OF OWARI WAS THE MOST WORTHY AND BEFITTING GUARDIAN FOR OUR PRESENT LIEGE, LORD TETSUGU!

'TIS INDEED OF LITTLE IMPORT TO US WHETHER IT WERE FATE OR CONSPIRACY THAT DID CAUSE LORD YOSHIMICHI'S DEATH...

AYE...



IN ADDITION TO CLEARING
NEW LAND TO CULTIVATE
RICE FIELDS AND PROMOTING
FRUGALITY AMONG HER
SUBJECTS, SHE HATH
SUCCEEDED IN FILLING UP
THE EMPTY COFFERS OF
WAKAYAMA CASTLE BY
SELLING IN EDO LARGE
QUANTITIES OF ORANGES
AND LUMBER AND OTHER
GOODS PRODUCED
IN HER DOMAIN.

ALL WHO
KNOW THE
TRUE STATE OF
AFFAIRS IN THIS
GOVERNMENT MUST
WISH FOR THIS
WISE RULER TO
REIGN OVER THE
WHOLE OF THE
REALM, AND
NOT JUST THE
PROVINCE OF KI.

INDEED, SO
UNANIMOUS IS THE
APPROBATION FOR
HER ACHIEVEMENTS
THAT NOBODY
SPEAKETH OF HER
TENDER AGE, OR
THE EXCESSING
LOW BIRTH OF
HER FATHER.



ALL YOU HAVE
SAID IS MOST RIGHT,
BUT SO LONG AS
OUR CHILD SHOGUN
IS ALIVE...



AND WITHIN
THE INNER
CHAMBERS,
THE CAMP OF
SIR GEKKO-
IN HATH FAR
STRONGER
SUPPORT
AMONG THE
MEN THAN
THAT OF SIR
TEN'EI-N...

WE HAVE LORD
TENOBU'S CONSORT
SIR TEN'EI-N ON OUR
SIDE, BUT THE BARON
OF ECHIZEN DOTH
HAVE SIR GEKKO-
IN ON HIS. HE MAY
HAVE BEEN A HERE
CONCUBINE, BUT
TODAY HE IS THE
FATHER OF THE
SHOGUN.

AYE,
'TIS
TRUE...



YOU HAVE
SPOKEN TRUE,
COLLEAGUE!
JUST THINK WHAT
LORD YOSHIMUNE
HATH DONE, AND
IN SPITE OF
HER YOUTH!

IN-
DEED!



'TIS TRUE OUR
FORMER LIEGE,
LORD TSUNAYOSHI,
DID GREATLY FAVOR
THE KI DOMAIN, BUT
EVEN IF WE PUT
THAT ASIDE, THERE
COULD SCARCELY BE
ANYONE MORE SUITED
TO THE OFFICE OF
SHOGUN THAN LORD
YOSHIMUNE AT
THIS TIME...

IF ONLY
WE COULD
FIND SOME
WAY...



E-JWA!!

HIGHER,
E-JWA,
HIGHER!!

W

In the history of the Ooku, very few women besides the shogun were able to go in and out of the Inner Chambers openly. Munabe Akifusa was one of them.

BOW
YE DOWN
FOR THE
ENTRANCE
OF OUR
LIEGE!!



NAY, E-JWA,
ONE MORE TIME!
LET ME UP!
PRITHER!

NOW, YOUR
HIGHNESS,
'TIS TIME
TO GO
INDOORS...

AH...

THE LADIES
OF THE OUTER
CHAMBERS HAVE
NOT THE BRAUN
TO PLAY WITH HER
HIGHNESS THUS.
'TIS SMALL WONDER
THAT SHE DOTH
WISH TO COME TO
THE INNER CHAMBERS
DAY AFTER DAY.



SIR
GEKKO-
IN!

IF THIS DOTH
INDEED COME TO
PASS, THEN I SHALL
GIVE MY BACKING TO LORD
TSUGUTOMO. IT MAY BE
THAT WHEN THE SENIOR
COUNCILLORS LEARN THAT
THE FATHER OF THE
SHOGUN DOTH REMAIN
ADAMANTLY DEVOTED
TO THE OWARI
CAUSE, THEY—

HOWEVER, I
DID ALSO HEAR
THAT LORD
TSUGUTOMO,
THE YOUNGER
BROTHER OF
LORD YOSHIMCHI,
SHALL SUCCEED
HER AS HEAD
OF THE OWARI
BRANCH.

IN THE FIRST
PLACE, 'TIS
UNSEEMLY FOR
THE FATHER OF
THE PRESENT
SHOGUN TO BE
SO CONCERNED
WITH SUCCESSION,
AS THOUGH HER
HIGHNESS WERE
ALREADY ON HER
DEATHBED...

I APPROVE
NOT OF MEN
CHATTERING IN
THIS WAY OF OUTER
CHAMBER MATTERS,
WHICH ARE THE
PROVINCE OF LEARNED
WOMEN. YOU ARE A
COURTIER, AND KNOW
LITTLE OF THAT
WORLD.

SIR
GEKKO-
IN.

LADY
MANABE.

YOU
APPEAR TO
BE TIRED.
WERE YOU
UNABLE TO
SLEEP
WELL LAST
NIGHT...?

I HAVE
HEARD
THAT LORD
TOKUGAWA
YOSHIMCHI
OF OWARI DID
SUDDENLY
PASS AWAY.

OH...

NO DOUBT
'TIS JUST
THE SIGNS
OF MY AGE
THAT YOU
DISCERN, SIR
GEKKO-IN.

...YOU, LADY
MANABE,
WHO TRY TO
REALIZE THE
WISHES OF
OUR LORD
JENOBU, ARE
NOW MORE
ISOLATED
THAN E'ER
BEFORE.

AND
THERE-
FORE...

THE RESULT IS,
OF COURSE, THAT THE
CANDIDATE FAVORED BY
THE SENIOR COUNCILLORS,
LORD YOSHIMUNE OF
KI, HATH NOW A CLEAR
ADVANTAGE IN THE
SUCCESSION CONTEST THAT
DOTH GRIP THE CASTLE.



PLAY WITH
ME AGAIN,
PRITHES.

I
THANK
THEE,
S.JWA.



LADY MANABE IS
RIGHT. FAR MORE
THAN THE WELL-
BEING OF HER
HIGHNESS, OUR
LORD AND MINE
OWN CHILD, I AM
CONSUMED BY FEARS
FOR THE POLITICAL
POSITION OF LADY
MANABE FOLLOWING
THE DEATH OF HER
HIGHNESS...

WHAT A
WRETCHED
FATHER
I AM,
FORSOOTH.

SIR!

AY,
S.JWA.

'TIS I
WHO
MUST
ASK
THEE...

NAY,
S.JWA...

...TO
PARDON
ME...

I BELIEVE
YOU DID WISH
TO KEEP IT
HIDDEN OUT
OF MY SIGHT,
AND HAD I NOT
CRIED OUT...

OH,
S.JWA.

I AM
SORRY...



These two men reigned supreme in the Inner Chambers of Edo Castle at this time.

Gékkō-in, concubine of the late shogun Ienobu and father of the present child shogun Ietsugu, and his Groom of the Bedchamber (Jima, now risen to the rank of Senior Chamberlain of the Inner Chambers.



YOU ARE TRULY BEGOTTED WITH HER, I SEE...



AHH... 'T WAS A MISTAKE TO DO WHAT I DID THAT DAY....! NOW I AM MORE MISERABLE THAN E'ER BEFORE, AND SHE MORE REMOTE....!!

AND LADY MANABÉ? SHE CARETH FOR ME NOT A JOT, SAVE AS THE FATHER OF OUR LORD THE SHOGUN. I AM A MAN TO HER IN THAT SENSE ONLY...



NAY, SIR, TO THE CONTRARY. I DO ENVY YOU.

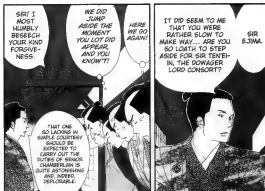
...YOU MUST BE DISGUSTED WITH ME.

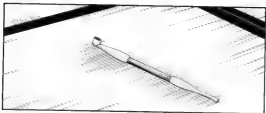
I'VE THE SHAVED HEAD OF A MONK, BUT THIS HEAD IS FILLED WITH NOTHING BUT THOUGHTS OF THE WOMAN I LOVE.



I CANNOT HELP BUT BELIEVE 'T IS NOT IN THE CARDS FOR ME, E'ER TO EXPERIENCE THE LIKE.

A LOVE THAT MAKETH ONE FORGET ONE'S STATION...







LET ME
BEG THY
PARDON IN
HANABUSA'S
STEAD...
PRITHES,
FORGIVE HIM
FOR WHAT
HE DID.

I PRAY
THEE.

DON'T
FOR MY
SAKE.



AYE, AYE,
I FORGIVE
HIM! I HAVE
ALREADY
FORGIVEN
HIM, SO
PRITHES!!
RAISE YOUR
HEAD, SIR, I
BEG YOU!!

SIR
S.J.W.A!

WHAT?!

W-WHEREFORE
SHOULD YOU
BOW DOWN TO
ME...?! PRAY
RAISE YOUR
HEAD, SIR
S.J.W.A!

WILT
THOU
FORGIVE
HIM?

BESEECH
ME NOT!!



...I
FORGIVE
THEE!

HANA-
BUSA.

...THOU
DIDST
SEE'T
WITH
THINE
OWN
EYES!

NOW THOU
KNOWEST FULL
WELL WHAT
A MERCIFUL,
GENEROUS
NATURE HATH
SIR S.J.W.A...



I AM
FOREVER
IN YOUR
DEBT.
KIND SIR
S.J.W.A!

I THANK
YOU MOST
GRATEFULLY!



YOSH-
KAWA.

SMOKING
A PIPE THAT WAS
ONCE STOLEN FROM
THEE SURELY CANNOT
BE ENJOYABLE. WILT
THOU ACCEPT THIS
ONE IN ITS STEAD,
AND BE DONE
WITH'T?



COME, COME, BE
NOT SO PUNCTILIOUS,
YOSHIKAWA. WE SONS
OF BPO ARE BRISK
AND EASY, AND 'TIS
NOT OUR STYLE TO
BEAR A GRUDGE.
LET US FORGET THIS
MATTER AND PUT
IT BEHIND US.

A-AND
ANYWAY, I
COULD NEVER
ACCEPT SO
SPLENDID A
PIPE FROM
YOU, FOR IT
IS FAR FINER
THAN MINE!

B-BUT,
SIR S.J.W.A!
SURELY YOU
CANNOT INTEND
TO LET THIS
FELLOW SO
EASILY OFF
THE HOOK!

WHAT?!

NOW,
HANABUSA.
THOU WILT
NE'ER AGAIN
TAKE WHAT
IS NOT THINE,
WILT THOU?



ONE WHO
HATH STICKY
FINGERS
CANNOT BE RID
OF THE HABIT
SO EASILY,
FOR 'TIS IN HIS
NATURE TO
STEAL!

AND WHY
SHOULD
WE
BELIEVE
THEE?!

YOSH-
KAWA.

NE'ER
AGAIN!
I SHALL
NE'ER DO
ANYTHING
OF THE
LIKE, I
SWEAR'T!!

N-NAY,
SIR!



THE
CONSEQUENCE
IS THAT THY
REPUTATION
FALLETH LOW
AMONG THE
MEN, WHILE
EJIMA DOTH
BASK IN THEIR
RENEWED
ESTEEM.

I UNDERSTAND THOU
HAST DISMISSED
HANABUSA, AFTER
EJIMA CHOSE TO
OVERLOOK THE
MATTER, WHICH ONLY
DOETH COMPOUND
THY ERROR.



INSTEAD,
THEY USE
THEIR LOW
BIRTH TO THEIR
ADVANTAGE,
ALWAYS TAKING
SO MECK AND
HUMBLE AN
ATTITUDE IN
THEIR DEALINGS
WITH ME THAT IT
MAKETH ME
LOOK A VILLAIN!

IF JUST
ONCE THEY
WOULD TAKE
UP THE
GALINTLET
I THROW
DOWN AT
THEM!

GEKKO-IN
AND EJIMA,
THOSE
KNAVES!



AND TO ADD INSULT
TO INJURY, EJIMA
HATH SO UNLOVELY
A COUNTEANCE
THAT HE PROVOKETH
NO ENVY AMONG
THE MEN WITH HIS
RISE. SO EVEN HIS
UGLINESS DOTH
SERVE HIM
WELL!

Another
thing I
resent
him for

But thou
art indeed
the villain
in these
dealings.



AY, BECAUSE HIS
WAY IS THE BEST.
COME, JUST THINK
ON'T—THE MATTER IS
NOW CLOSED, BUT NOT
SO PEOPLE'S MOUTHS.
WHAT DID HAPPEN
TODAY IS ON THE LIPS
OF ALL HERE IN THE
INNER CHAMBERS.

I SAY,
MYAJI, 'TIS
IMPOSSIBLE
TO GET THE
BETTER OF
SIR EJIMA!

AS A RESULT,
THE STOCK OF
SIR EJIMA HATH
RISEN ONCE
AGAIN AMONG
THE MEN.



AND
WELL
THOU
SHOULDST
BE.

I AM
MOST
MORTIFIED,
SIR
TEN'EI-IN!







TODAY 'TIS INDEED BECOME THE CUSTOM FOR BROODS OF THE BEDCHAMBER TO STOP AT THE THEATER ON THEIR WAY BACK TO THE CASTLE FROM THE TEMPLE. THOU KNOWEST THAT TO OFFER PRAYERS AT THE SHRINES OF SHOGUNS PAST IN THE TEMPLES OF ZOJO-JI AND KAN'EI-JI, ON BEHALF OF THE LORD CONSORT AND CONCUBINES, IS ONE OF THEIR DUTIES.



AYE, I TOO, DEAR SHINGORO...

SO YOU, TOO ...?

AYE, IN FACT 'TIS SO...

BUT TO TARRY IN TOWN AT A PLAYHOUSE IS, IN FACT, AGAINST THE OKU CODE, IS'N'T NOT?



THOU ART TO MY TASTE. I LIKE NOT PLUMP, FLABBY WOMEN.

DANJURO IS A PETITE, LOVELY MAIDEN, FAR MORE TO THE TASTE OF GENTLEMEN THAN I, I'M SURE. I'M SO TALL AND SCraggy.

OH, I WONDER IF IT COULD BE TRUE.

I HEAR THY JUNIOR, DANJURO II, IS NOW RISING SWIFTLY IN POPULAR ESTEEM—BUT AS EVER, I HAVE EYES FOR THEES ONLY, SWEET SHINGORO.



COME, COME, REPROACH ME NOT. 'TIS MOST DISTRESSING FOR ME TOO, BUT WHEN ONE IS A CHAMBERLAIN IN THE INNER CHAMBERS OF EDO CASTLE 'TIS NOT EASY TO GET AWAY...

THOUGH THE INNER CHAMBERS TODAY ARE FAR, FAR LESS STRICTLY CONTROLLED THAN THEY HITHERTO WERE...

AND WHAT ART THOU, IF NOT PLUMP AND FLABBY?

AND HOW WOULD I GET PLUMP AND FLABBY, WHEN YOU COME SO INFREQUENTLY TO SEE ME, SIR FULINAWA? I WASTE AWAY WAITING FOR YOU, SIR, UNABLE TO SWALLOW A MORSEL FOR PINING.





BUT IN OUR CHAMBERS, NEITHER SIR EJIMA NOR SIR GEKKO-IN HATH THE SLIGHTEST REGARD FOR THE THEATER, NOR DO THEY OFTEN ASK US TO GO TO THE TEMPLE ON THEIR BEHALF.

IF YE HAD TOLD ME ERE I DID ENTER THESE INNER CHAMBERS THAT I'D LONG FOR A WOMAN'S BODY, I'D NOT HAVE BELIEVED IT! I HAD MAIDS COMING OUT OF MY EARS IN EDO... BUT AFTER THREE YEARS HERE, AHHH!

WELL, FOR SIR GEKKO-IN TO HAVE NO REGARD FOR THE THEATER IS HARDLY A SURPRISE...



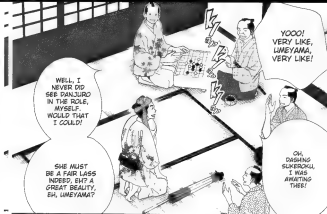
HEY...

...



WHA?

AFTER ALL, HE IS THE ONLY MAN IN ALL THE INNER CHAMBERS WHO IS BEDDED MOST EVERY NIGHT BY A REAL, LIVE WOMAN. WHAT NEED HATH HE TO GO SLAVERING OVER ACTRESSES AT THE—



WELL, I NEVER DID SEE DANJURO IN THE ROLE, MYSELF. WOULD THAT I COULD!

SHE MUST BE A FAIR LASS INDEED, EH? A GREAT BEAUTY, EH, UMEYAMA?

YOOO! VERY LIKE, UMEYAMA, VERY LIKE!

OH, DASHING SILVERCKGL, I WAS AWAITING THEE!



AAAASH, IF ONLY I COULD SEE HER! JUST ONCE IN MY LIFE, TO GO TO THE THEATER AND WATCH A PLAY!!

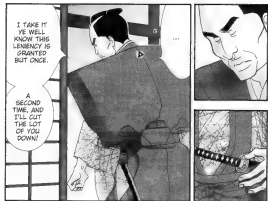
IF WE SPEAK ONLY OF LOOKS, I SAY IKUSHIMA SHINGORO IS THE GREATER BEAUTY. I WAGER SHE IS MOST COMELY E'EN WITH THE FACE PAINT OFF!

NAY NAY, THOU HAST GOT IT WRONG, FOR THE LEAD ACTOR MUST PLAY A MAN—SO 'TIS A DIFFERENT QUALITY SHE HATH. NOT SO MUCH A PRETTY LASS, AS A HANDSOME GALLANT... 'TIS THIS THAT MAKETH THE WOMEN IN THE THEATER SWOON.



OH, AYE, NUDE LASSES, AYE!

COME, COME, OKTSU, THOU HAST NO WISH TO WATCH A PLAY! 'TIS THE ACTORS IN THE PLAY THAT THOU DOST WISH TO SEE, AND WITHOUT THEIR COSTUMES. AM I RIGHT?





I'M
SORRY,
EJUMA.

AND I'M
AWARE OF
THE BURDEN
THIS HATH
PLACED UPON
THEE ALSO. AND
YET MY WISH TO
SEE MY BELOVED
OVERRIDE THIS
KNOWLEDGE,
FOR I COULD
NOT FORBEAR
SEEING HER...

INVITING LADY
MANAGE TO
MY CHAMBERS
ALMOST EVERY
DAY WAS BOUND
TO SET TONGUES
WAGGING. THOUGH
OUR MEETINGS
ARE CHASTE, I
CAN SEE HOW IT
DOETH APPEAR
TO OTHERS.



SES,
EJUMA...

SIR
SEKKO-IN



I COULD THANK
THEE EVERY DAY
FOR THY HEARTFELT
DEVOTION AND STILL
NOT THANK THEE
ENOUGH.

AND THAT IS WHY I
WISH FOR THEE TOO
TO FORGET ABOUT ME
FOR A FEW HOURS AND
ENJOY THYSELF WITH
THE OTHERS.

AYE.



PRITHEE GO
TO ZOJO-JI IN
MY STEAD, TO
PRAY AT THE
SHRINE THERE
TO OUR LATE
LORD TENDOU,
IF THOU
WOULDEST.

EJUMA.



FROM WHAT I HEAR,
THE PILGRIMAGE
HATH BECOME BUT
A PRETEXT FOR
VISITING A PLAYHOUSE,
IN ALL T'OTHER
CHAMBERS. IF THAT
IS NOW CUSTOMARY,
TIS UNJUST THAT
ONLY THE MEN IN
MY CHAMBERS BE
DEPRIVED OF THE
PLEASURE.



AYE,
M'LORD.

AND, ON YOUR
RETURN TO THE
CASTLE, STOP AT
A THEATER WITH
ALL THY RETINUE
TO ENJOY A PLAY.
THE MEN NEED
A BIT OF LEISURE
FROM TIME
TO TIME.



Sign Yoshida-ya





Carlson Yoshida-ya



ALREADY
I AM
CONFUSED.

HM.

WHERE ON
EARTH SHOULD
ONE FIND WOMEN
COURTESANS, SELLING
THEMSELVES TO MEN?
WELL, I SUPPOSE 'TIS
LIKE A DREAM FOR THE
WENCHES OF EDO, WHO
DO WORK THEMSELVES
RAGGED AND PINCH
PENNIES TO BUY A
NIGHT WITH A MAN...



SHIN-
GORO!



I HOPE
YOU WILL
ENJOY
IKUSHIMA
SHINGORO
IN THE
SCENE.



ITAEEMON WAS
THE SON AND
HEIR OF A BIG
MERCHANT
HOUSE, BUT
HE HATH BEEN
DISOWNED FOR
BECOMING
BESOTTED
WITH THE
COURTESAN
YUGURI, AND IS
NOW FALLEN
VERY LOW.



WELL, LET
ME GRIT
MY TEETH
AND GET
THROUGH
THIS...



IZAEMON-
SAN.

PRITHEE
ROUSE
YOURSELF,
SIR.



WITH GREAT
RESPECT, I
DARE SAY THIS
ACTOR, IKUSHIMA
SHINGORO, DOTH
SOMEWHAT
RESEMBLE OUR
MASTER, SIR
GEKKO-N.

ISN'T
THAT
IZAEMON
A MOST
DASHING,
INDEED
ALLURING,
FELLOW?



...



SUCH
BEAUTY...

...BELONGS
TO THE
WORLD OF
DREAMS...

NAY, MIYAJI, THOU
ART MISTAKEN—
FOR THAT IS NOT
A CREATURE OF
THIS WORLD. NO
MAN IN THIS ALL-
TOO REAL WORLD
OF OURS COULD
BE SO EXQUISITE.
INDEED...



...NAY.





From that day
on, Ejima began
making frequent
visits to the
Yamamura-za
playhouse.





Ōoku

© THE INNER CHAMBERS



MM.

WE THANK YOU MOST GRATEFULLY FOR GRACING OUR LITTLE PLAYHOUSE, SIR EJIMA. PRAY DO COME AGAIN...



OH, AYE, MYAJI. IS'T ALMOST THE HOUR OF THE SHEEP?

SIR EJIMA.



HE IS THE ONLY MASTER WHO IS SO PUNCTILIOUS. THE FELLOWS OF THE OTHER CHAMBERS, WHEN STOPPING TO SEE A PLAY AFTER A TEMPLE VISIT, HAVE NO QUALMS ABOUT STAYING OUT PAST THE SEVENTH HOUR. INDEED, THEY TARRY AFTERWARDS IN THE TEAHOUSES WITH THE ACTORS, LUCKY DOGS.

WOULD THAT WE COULD SOMETIMES STAY AND SEE A PLAY TO THE END OF THE STORY.

FORSOOTH, SIR EJIMA IS STRAIGHT SQUARED AND TRUE—OR SHOULD I SAY, A RIGHT STICKLER FOR THE RULES...

HE DOETH INSIST, EVERY TIME, ON GETTING UP AND LEAVING IN TIME TO ARRIVE AT THE CASTLE BERE THE ENTRANCE OF THE SEVENTH HOUR IS LOOKED—THAT IS, IN THE MIDDLE OF THE PLAY THE CONSEQUENCE IS THAT WE HAVE NEVER SEEN THE ENDING, NOT ONCE!





BY MY
TROT... THAT
GAUDY PARADE
OF MEN COULD
BE NOTHING BUT
THE COURTIER
OF THE TANK
CHAMBERS.
HOW MANY
THEY ARE!

I SUPPOSE
THEY WENT
TO A TEMPLE
TO OFFER
PRAYERS FOR
THE TOKUGAWA
LORDS, AND
STOPPED TO
WATCH A PLAY
ON THE WAY
BACK TO THE
CASTLE.

THOU HAST
GOT IT THE WRONG
WAY AROUND, I
WAGER. THEY WENT
TO THE THEATER,
AND STOPPED AT
THE TEMPLE ON THE
WAY THERE, TO BURN
SOME INCENSE!

AND WHEREFORE
DO THEY FLOCK TO THE
THEATER—FOR LOVE OF
FINE ACTING? MAY, I THINK
NOT... STRANDED IN THAT
DESERT OF MEN, THEY
ARE THIRSTY FOR WOMEN,
THAT'S ALL. THEY GO TO
OGLE THE ACTORS AND
DREAM OF LYING WITH
THEM!

OH, UH,
KASHIWAGI.
AYE...AYE.
AHA AHA AHA AHA
AHA AHA...

AH.

SIR
MATSUHIMA.

I COME.
ANON. I
SHALL BE
OUTSIDE
SHORTLY.

I BEG YOU TO
LINGER NOT, FOR
IF WE STAY ANY
LONGER, WE SHALL BE
UNABLE TO ENTER THE
CASTLE. THE ENTRANCE
OF THE SEVENTH
HOUR IS ONE THING,
BUT THE ENTRANCE
OF THE LOCK IS QUITE
ANOTHER. WE SIMPLY
CANNOT ARRIVE AFTER
THAT IS LOCKED.



M'LORD!
SIR!! I AM
COME!! I AM
COME!!

THOU
FOOLISH
WRETCH!!
WE ARE
DEPARTING
WITHOUT
THEE,
MATSU-
SHIMA!!



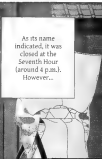
The first was the Hirakawa Gate, which stood between Edo Castle and the world outside.



The men had to pass through three gates in order to the Inner Chambers.



The second was the Entrance of the Lock, which separated the Inner Chambers from the Outer Chambers.





MY LORD... I
AM MOST
MORTIFIED...

AND I TOO,
FOR 'TIS I, THE
MASTER OF THOSE
WHO ARRIVE
BELATEDLY, WHO
MUST APOLOGIZE
AFTERWARD TO THE
OFFICIAL AT THE
GATE. SPARE ME
THIS INDIGNITY,
FUJINAMI.



EVEN SO,
DOST THOU
NOT AGREE
THAT YE
ARE TOO
OFTEN TARDY
OF LATE,
FUJINAMI?

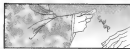


NOW, EVEN WITHOUT
ALL THIS, THE SENIOR
COUNCILLORS LATELY ACCUSE
THE INNER CHAMBERS OF
WANTON DISSIPATION, AND
SAY WE ARE A USELESS
DRAIN ON THE SHOGUNATE'S
COFFERS. GIVE THEM NO
MORE FODDER, FUJINAMI.
TRULY, I WISH TO HEAR
NO MORE OF'T.



SEKKO-NI'S
ATTENDANT'S ALSO
STOP TO ENJOY A
PLAY SOMETIMES
AFTER GOING TO THE
TEMPLE ON THEIR
MASTER'S BEHALF, BUT
BY ALL ACCOUNTS
THEY ARE ALWAYS
BACK BEFORE THE
SEVENTH HOUR.

A-AYE, SIR,
INDEED.
REGRETTABLY,
IN THIS INSTANCE
MATSUSHIMA, A
GROOM OF THE
BEDCHAMBER, GOT
A LITTLE TOO
CARRIED AWAY
AND... WELL...



WELL, WELL,
MALADY
CANNOT BE
HELPED, AND
'TWOULD NOT
DO TO LEAVE
AN AILING MAN
UNTREATED. I
SEE YOU HAD
GOOD REASON
TO BE LATE.

PRAY
GO INSIDE
TO YOUR
QUARTERS.
YOU MAY
PASS.



AYE, MISTRESS.
ONE OF THE
GROOMS OF THE
BEDCHAMBER
ABRUPTLY FELT
UNWELL ON THE
JOURNEY BACK,
AND NEEDED
MINISTERS.
PRAY ACCEPT
MY SINCERE
REGRETS...



As a result, very
few in the Inner
Chambers felt
the need to
return before the
Entrance of the
Seventh Hour
was locked.



THAT IS
NOT QUITE
TRUE,
ACTUALLY...



AS ATTENDANTS
TO SIR TEN'E-IN, WE
ARE LIVING IN THE
SHADOWS OF THE INNER
CHAMBERS, CONDEMNED
TO OBSCURITY FOR THE
REST OF OUR DAYS.
WE COULD SCARCELY
FALL LOWER THAN WE
ALREADY HAVE!



'TIS TRUE THAT
AT PRESENT
THE PERSONAGE
WIELDING THE
GREATEST
INFLUENCE IN THE
INNER CHAMBERS
IS THE HONORED
FATHER OF
OUR LIEGE, SIR
GEKKO-IN.

WHAT
ART THOU
SAYING?



IN THE SUCCESSION
CONTEST NOW TAKING
PLACE, MANY OF THE
SENIOR COUNCILLORS
SUPPORT LORD YOSHIMUNE
OF THE KII DOMAIN, AND
AS SUCH, THE BARON OF
ECHIZEN, WHO DOTH PUSH
FOR LORD TSUGUTOMO
OF OWARI, IS BECOMING
MORE AND MORE
ISOLATED WITHIN THE
GOVERNMENT.

HOWEVER, ARE
HE AND HIS
MOST INTIMATE
ALLY, MANABE
AKIFUSA, THE
BARON OF
ECHIZEN, THE
MOST POWERFUL
PERSONAGES IN
SUO CASTLE?
THAT IS THE
QUESTION.



MY
LORD...

I HAVE NO
WORDS TO
EXPRESS MY
SHAME!



SIR
MATSUBHIMA,
YOU OUGHT
TO BE A
LITTLE MORE
CAUTIOUS.



THERE IS NO
FALLING DOWN
IF ONE IS LOW
TO BEGIN WITH.
KASHIWAGI, WORDS
LIKE "DOWNFALL"
ARE MORE SUITED
TO THOSE WHO
ARE RIDING HIGH,
LIKE THE FELLOWS
IN GEKKO-IN'S
CHAMBERS.

LEAD
TO MY
DOWNFALL?
HMPH.

THEY HAVE TURNED
A BLIND EYE SO FAR
TO YOUR WENCHING
IN THE TEAHOUSES,
BUT DO IT TOO OFTEN
AND ONE DAY IT
MAY LEAD TO YOUR
DOWNFALL.





HONORED FATHER!



YES SIR,
I FEEL MUCH
BETTER. I AM
SORRY FOR
CAUSING YOU
ANXIETY, AND
BEG YOUR
PARDON
FOR'T.

I WAS
DELIGHTED
TO HEAR THAT
YOUR FEVER
HATH COME
DOWN AND YOU
ARE FEELING
BETTER.

YOUR
HIGHNESS.

OH!
ARE YOU
ALREADY
ABLE TO
MAKE SO
NOBLE AND
WORTHY A
REPLY!



THE POLITICAL
AFFAIRS OF THE
OUTER CHAMBERS
ARE FAR MORE
DEEPLY CONNECTED
TO THE INNER
CHAMBERS THAN
YOU THINK.

IF IT BOTH
HAPPEN AS
I BELIEVE,
THEN LORD
YOSHIMUNE
MAY CHOOSE
A CONCUBINE
FROM OUR
MIST.

WHEN
I SAID YOU
SHOULD BE
PRUDENT, I MEANT
YOU OUGHT NOT
CRIPPLE YOUR
OWN CHANCE OF
ADVANCEMENT
WITH DISSOLUTE
BEHAVIOR!



...DOST
INTEND TO
RISE IN THE
RANKS?

THOU...

...KASHI-
WAGI.



WITHOUT THIS
PURPOSE,
WHY COME TO
SUCH A PLACE
AS THIS? A
LIFE SPENT
HERE WITHOUT
PROMOTION
IS NO LIFE
AT ALL.

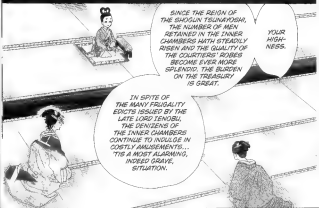
CERTES
I DO.



BARON TSUCHIYA OF SAGAMI SEEKS SOME SORT OF PROOF TO TURN INTO HARD, FAST TRUTH THE RUMOR THAT YOU AND I ARE TRYSTING HERE IN YOUR CHAMBERS EVERY DAY.



Lord Tsuchiya Masanao, Baron of Sagami, served as a Senior Councillor to no less than four shoguns—Tsunayoshi, Ienobu, Ietsugu, and Yoshimune.



SINCE THE REIGN OF THE SHOGUN TSUNAYOSHI, THE NUMBER OF MEN RETAINED IN THE INNER CHAMBERS HATH STEADILY RISEN AND THE QUALITY OF THE COURTIERS' ROBES BECOME EVER MORE SPLENDID. THE BURDEN ON THE TREASURY IS GREAT.

YOUR HIGHNESS.

IN SPITE OF THE MANY FRUGALITY EDICTS ISSUED BY THE LATE LORD IENOBU, THE DENIZENS OF THE INNER CHAMBERS CONTINUE TO INDULGE IN COSTLY AMUSEMENTS... 'TIS A MOST ALARMING, INDEED GRAVE, SITUATION.



EJIMA! BOHIZEN SAID THAT I MAY RIDE A HORSE TODAY!

I AM VERY GLAD TO HEART, YOUR HIGHNESS. THEN LET US GO NOW TO THE GARDEN OF FUKIAKE.



AYE...

LADY MANABE.

AND I CAN WELL GUESS THE TENOR OF THEIR CONVERSATIONS.

'TIS REPORTED THAT BARON TSUCHIYA OF SAGAMI AND OTHER GOVERNMENT MINISTERS ARE FREQUENTLY SEEN TO BE CALLING ON SIR TENFEI-IN IN HIS CHAMBERS.

FORGIVE HER...
ECHZEN'S FEALTY
IS SO GREAT
THAT SHE DOTH
SPEAK HARSHLY
AT TIMES.

AND...ECHZEN
IS TO ME LIKE A
MOTHER. I PRAY
THEE, BARON SASAKI,
QUARREL NOT WITH
MY DEAR ECHZEN!

PRITHEE,
BARON
SASAKI!

HOW DARE YOU
SPEAK TO ME OF
TEMERITY?! I
DECLARE, YOU ARE
THE PROVERBIAL
FOX THAT HATH
BORROWED A TIGER'S
SKIN! I SOUGHT
NOT YOUR COUNSEL,
SO YOU MAY KEEP
YOUR THOUGHTS
TO YOURSELF!

BARON
ECHZEN!



FORSOOTH,
WHEN MANABE
IS WITH MY
HONORED FATHER
IN THE INNER
CHAMBERS, SHE
DOTH SEEM TO
BE MY OWN
TRUE MOTHER.

MY
LORD...

FORSOOTH,
BARON
SASAKI...

DO MY HONORED
FATHER AND
EJINA USE THE
TAKES PAID BY
THE PEOPLE
IN FRIVOLOUS,
WASTEFUL
WAYS, AS SHE
SAYETH?

IS THAT
RIGHT,
ECHZEN?

MAY,
YOUR
HIGH-
NESS!

THE
INNER
CHAMBERS.
HWA...

AND YET
BARON SASAKI,
WHO HAD NOTHING
TO SAY ON THIS
MATTER DURING LORD
TSUNAYOSHI'S TIME,
DOTH NOW HAVE THE
TEMERITY TO DEMAND
FRUGALITY OF SIR
GEKKO-UN!

I DENY IT NOT THAT
THERE ARE THOSE IN THE
INNER CHAMBERS WHO
LIVE IN THE LAP OF LUXURY
AND INDULGE IN FRIVOLITY,
DAY AFTER DAY—BUT THEY
ALL SERVE IN THE CHAMBERS
OF SIR TEN'EN-IN, WHO IS, I
BELIEVE, BARON SASAKI'S
INTIMATE. WOULD IT NOT BE
MORE EXPEDIENT TO SPEAK
DIRECTLY TO HIM THAN TO THE
SHOGUN, BARON SASAKI?

THEY
MOST
CERTAINLY
DO NOT!

BOTH YOUR
HONORED FATHER SIR
GEKKO-UN AND EJINA
ARE EXCEEDINGLY MODEST
IN THEIR HABITS AND
CONDUCT WHEN COMPARED
WITH SIR O-DEN, THE CONCU-
BINE OF LORD TSUNAYOSHI,
FOR EXAMPLE. THE NUMBER
OF MEN EMPLOYED IN THE
INNER CHAMBERS, ALSO,
HATH INDEED NOT RISEN
SINCE THE REIGN OF
LORD TSUNAYOSHI,
I BELIEVE.





'TIS AS
YOU SAY,
LADY
MANABE.

AYE. ...



YOU AND
I DID BOTH
SERVE THE
NOBLE LORD
TENOBU.

AS LORD
TENOBU'S
FAITHFUL
SERVANTS,
HOW COULD
WE EVER
ENGAGE IN
CONDUCT
THAT WOULD
BETRAY
OUR LIEGE?



AYE!

WHEN
THE TWO
OF THEM ARE
TOGETHER, THEY
DO APPEAR TO BE
YOUR OWN TRUE
PARENTS, YOUR
HIGHNESS?

...IS
THAT
INDEED
SO.

...



IF SHE
COULD PROVE
THIS SCANDAL
TO BE FACT,
THEN SHE WOULD
SUCCEED IN
DISLOGGING ME
FROM MY POSITION
AND SECURING
THE SHOGUN'S
SEAT FOR HER
FAVORITE, LORD
YOSHIMUNE.

I AM
CERTAIN
THAT, UPON
HEARING
THESE WORDS,
BARON SASAKI
DID HARBOR
THE NOTION
THAT YOU
AND I ARE
ENGAGED IN
ILlicit
AMOROUS
RELATIONS.



SURELY
YOU
AGREE?

AFTER ALL,
YOU AND I HAVE
NEVER SO MUCH AS
EXCHANGED A SINGLE
IMPROPER GLANCE.
OUR CONDUCT
HATH BEEN
IRREPROACHABLE.

HOWEVER,
WE HAVE
NOTHING TO
FEAR, SIR
GEKKO-IN.





THAT HE IS,
BUT SIR BJUMA
DOTH STOP AT
THE PLAYHOUSE
QUITE OFTEN
NOWADAYS. 'TIS A
NICE CHANGE.



AYE, IT IS. AND
WHAT DID CAUSE
IT, MYAJI? I SAY
OUR MASTER
IS INFATUATED
WITH IKUSHIMA
SHINGORO, THOUGH
OF COURSE WE'LL
NE'ER HEART FROM
HIS OWN LIPS.



WELL,
SHE'S
A REAL
BEAUTY,
SHE IS.

BUT SIR
BJUMA WOULD
NEVER TELL
HER THAT
HE WISHETH
TO SPEND AN
HOUR OR TWO
WITH HER AT
A TEAHOUSE.
NAY, NOT SIR
BJUMA...



WHAT SAY YE TO
THIS, THAT WE ENTREAT
SIR BEKKO-IN ON HIS
BEHALF? IF SIR BJUMA
WOULDN'T DO IT HIMSELF,
THEN WE SHALL MAKE
THE ARRANGEMENTS
FOR HIM TO SPEND SOME
TIME WITH IKUSHIMA
SHINGORO AT A
TEAHOUSE!

FEL-
LWS!



SIR FUJINAMI,
THE CHAMBERLAIN,
DID RECEIVE A
SCOLDING FOR HIS
OVERINDULGENCE!
TOO MUCH
MERRYMAKING,
SIR TEN'BIN
TOLD HIM!

HEY,
DID YE
HEAR?



I SAY, SIR FUJINAMI
MUST BE VIGOROUS
INDEED—HE DALLIES WITH
THE WOMEN ACTORS,
BUT I HEAR HE IS QUITE
AMOROUS WITH MEN
ALSO. THOSE WHO SERVE
UNDER HIM TRULY SERVE
UNDER ANNI—AND CAN
NEVER SIT DOWN
FOR THE PAIN!

HAH! 'T WAS ABOUT
TIME HE AND HIS
MEN WERE RESUKED.
WE FEEL LUCKY TO
SEE HALF A PLAY,
BUT THEY EVEN
STAY AFTERWARD
AND PAY FOR A
TUMBLE WITH THE
ACTORS.

Ha ha ha ha



WELL, I WOULDN'T
MIND WATCHING A
PLAY TO THE END FOR
ONCE. SIR FUJINAMI
MAY BE EXCESSIVELY
INDULGENT, BUT
OUR MASTER IS
EXCESSIVELY STRAIT...



AYE.

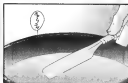
I BELIEVE
SIR EJIMA'S
INTERVIEW
IS ALMOST
OVER. WE
HAD BETTER
SEE TO THE
EVENING MEAL
PREPARATIONS.

NOBLE SIR
GEKKO-N!
OUR MASTER
IS FORTHWITH
MOST UNDER-
STANDING AND
SYMPATHETIC!



WELL,
WELL.

SO EJIMA
HATH A
FAVORITE
ACTOR,
DOTH HE?
FORSOOTH...
I KNEW'T
NOT.



'T'WILL
BENEFIT SIR
EJIMA, AND
ALSO LET US
STAY TO THE
END OF THE
PLAY!

OH, HO!
'TIS A
MARVELOUS
PLAN,
MIYAJI!



AYE, OF COURSE
I AM FORT. I
SHALL SPEAK TO
THE SENTRY AT
THE ENTRANCE
OF THE SEVENTH
HOUR IN ADVANCE,
SO THAT THERE IS
NO TROUBLE. YE
CAN TELL EJIMA
THAT THIS IDEA
WAS MINE OWN.

HA
HA!

I DID
WONDER
WHAT
PETITION
YE MIGHT
HAVE, THAT
IT MUST
BE MADE
WHILE EJIMA
IS AWAY
FROM MY
CHAMBERS...



NO NEED TO
THANK ME, MIYAJI.
'TIS NOTHING AT ALL,
AND I AM GLAD TO
DO'T. ASK ME AS OFTEN
AS THOU DOST WISH,
FOR EJIMA HIMSELF
DOTH NOT BREATHE
A WORD TO ME OF
SUCH MATTERS.

MY-
LORD!

WE
ARE MOST
GRATEFUL
THAT YOU
APPROVE SO
CHEERFULLY
OUR BOLD
REQUEST...
MOST GRATE-
FUL, NEDD,
SIR GEKKO-N.





I PRAY
YOU TO
GRANT
ME LEAVE
TO ENTER
INTO
SERVICE.

HONORED
MOTHER.

IF THAT
BE TRUE,
THEN ONE WITH
MY COUNTESSANCE
MAY BY CONTRAST
PROSPER... I DO
BELIEVE THAT I CAN
MAKE SOMETHING
OF MYSELF BY
SERVING IN THE
PRIVATE CHAMBERS
OF A GREAT
LORD.



AIE,
MY
SON...

AIE... SHIN-
ZABURO.



His mother may well have been thinking the same thing, she immediately made the necessary arrangements for Ejima to become a valet in the mansion of Tokugawa Ienobu, then still the lord of the Kofu domain.



TAKE IT NOT
TOO MUCH
TO HEART,
SHINZABURO.

THOU DOST
EXCEL WITH
BOTH PEN
AND SWORD,
AND ART A
SON TO MAKE
ANY MOTHER
MOST PROUD.

ERE LONG
WE SHALL FIND
A YOUNG LADY
WHO IS ABLE TO
SEE THE BEAUTY
OF THY NOBLE
SPIRIT, OF THAT
I AM CERTAIN.

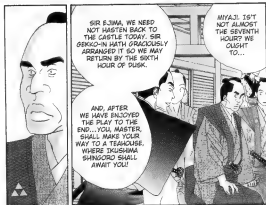
HONORED
MOTHER.



SHIN-
ZABURO...

THIS IS
SOMETHING
I HAVE BEEN
PONDERING
FOR SOME
TIME, ACTUALLY,
BUT... MIGHT
YOU CONSIDER
ALLOWING ME
TO SERVE AS
AN ATTENDANT
IN ONE OF THE
GREAT LORDLY
MANSIONS?

FROM
WHAT I HAVE
HEARD, GOOD-
LOOKING MEN
AROUSE ENVY
AMONG THE OTHER
ATTENDANTS
IN THE CHAMBERS
AND THUS HAVE
LITTLE CHANCE OF
RISING IN THE
RANKS.







WHAT GROCER IN ALL
EDO HATH A DAIKON
RADISH SO BEAUTIFUL
AS THIS?! I'VE SPENT
THE LAST TEN YEARS OF
MY LIFE WITH NAUGHT
BUT MEN AROUND
ME. SO LET ME
TREMBLE A BIT,
'TIS NO SIN!

...SAY IT
NOT SO
LIGHTLY!



OH!

I DO BEG
YOUR PARDON,
SIR! I SPOKE
OUT OF TURN
AND DID OFFEND
THIS NOBLE
WORTHY WITH MY
IMPERTINENCE...

OH,
MERCY!
PRITHEE...
HEE HEE
HEE HEE



THE OP-
POSITENITY



PIE, THAT'S
JUST A
FANCY WAY
OF SAYING
THOU
FINDEST ME
WANTING!

NAVY, SIR, 'TIS
JUST THAT...OH,
YOU ARE SO UNLIKE
ANY OF THE OTHER
HIGH AND MIGHTY
PERSONS I HAVE
ENCOUNTERED
BEFORE.

NAVY,
SIR, NOT
AT ALL.
INDEED,
THE
OPPOSITE.



I...
NAVY...
AYE...

OH MERCY, A MAN WITH
THE STATURE OF A
CHAMBERLAIN IN THE
INNER CHAMBERS OF
EDO CASTLE DOTH
SHAKE WITH NERVES?
I SHAN'T BITE YOU,
SIR! PRAY DO MAKE
YOURSELF MORE
AT EASE.



TODAY,
THE CUSTOMER
WHO BOUGHT MY
BODY WAS YOU,
SIR S-JIMA... BOIL
IT, GRILL IT,
OR EAT IT RAW--
'TIS YOURS TO
DO WITH AS
YOU WISH.

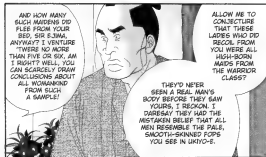


SIR S-JIMA,
YOUR
WORSHIP.
AN ACTOR
IS NOT A
HUMAN
BEING.

WE ARE BUT
MERCHANDISE,
OUR BODIES
FOR SALE LIKE
THE GREENS
AND DAIKON
RADISHES
YOU SEE AT A
GROCER'S.









NAV.

NOT
TODAY.
I'LL TAKE
MY LEAVE
OF THEE
NOW.



I'VE
ALREADY
HAD TOO
MANY JOYS
FOR ONE
DAY—ANY
MORE WOULD
TIP THE
BALANCE.

IF, ON TOP
OF SEEING A
PLAY TO THE
FINAL CURTAIN,
I LAY WITH A
BEAUTY LIKE YOU,
THE GODS WOULD
SAY "TIS TOO MUCH
FOR ONE MAN.
I DO FEAR THEIR
WRATH, SO
I'LL GO NOW.

IF THOU
WERT TO
CALL ME A
LILY-LINERED
COWARD,
THEN THOU
WOULDST BE
RIGHT, FOR
THAT IS
WHAT I AM.



HAD YOU
COME OF AGE IN
THE BACK ALLEYS OF
EDO INSTEAD OF YOUR
FINE SAMURAI MANSES,
WELL—THE LASSES
WOULD FIGHT O'er A
MAN SO BURLY AND
VIRILE AS YOU,
SIR EJIMA.

AH, THAT A
MAN LIKE YOU—A
REAL MAN—IS
HID AWAY IN THE
INNER CHAMBERS!
WHAT A COLOSSAL
WASTE!



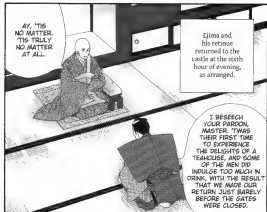
...



COME, SWEET
SIR EJIMA. I
CARE NOT A BIT
ABOUT THESE
CONCERNS OF
YOURS.

PRAY LET
YOURSELF FEEL
AT EASE. I CAN
PROMISE YOU PLEASURES
SUCH AS A VIRGIN MAID
COULD NEVER GIVE YOU TO
TASTE, FOR I KNOW MANY
AMOROUS TRICKS THAT WILL
SEND YOU TO PARADISE.

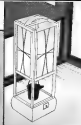
AM?
PRITHER...



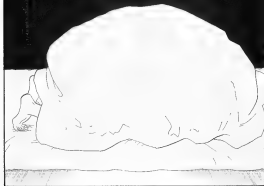


"SHALL
I BE
GRANTED
THIS
HONOR
AGAIN...?"

"SIR
EJIMA."



This
was the
happiest
night of
Ejima's
life.







Ōoku

● THE INNER CHAMBER

by Kōji Ōgino



I HAVE SUMMONED YOU HERE TO ANNOUNCE A COMMAND FROM THE SHOGUNATE.

I AM MATSUMAE YOSHIHIRO, BARON OF IZU AND A CASTELLAN OF BDO CASTLE.



NO IDEA.

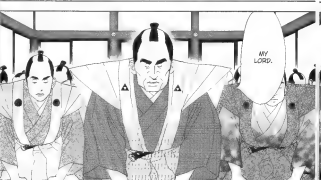
HE DID APPEAR TO BE MOST AGITATED...

WHAT IS'T?



FOR WHAT PURPOSE?

AN OFFICIAL OF THE OUTER CHAMBERS WISHEETH TO SEE ME?

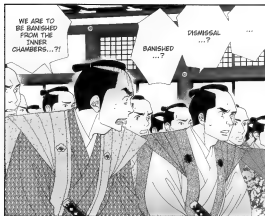


MY LORD.



VERY WELL. LET US GO AT ONCE, THEN.

I KNOW NOT THE PARTICULARS, SIR, BUT THE TENOR WAS EXCEEDINGLY GRAVE AND URGENT. THE SUMMONS WAS FOR ALL THE MEN IN YOUR PERSONAL CHAMBERS TO APPEAR IN THE GREAT RECEPTION HALL....



WE ARE TO
BE BANISHED
FROM THE
INNER
CHAMBERS...?!

DISMISSAL
...?

BANISHED
...?



BE GONE.

...!!



EIJIMA,
SENIOR
CHAMBERLAIN
OF THE
INNER
CHAMBERS.

IN SPITE OF OCCUPYING
THE IMPORTANT POST
OF SENIOR CHAMBERLAIN,
YOU DID TARRY AT THE
YAMANURA-ZA PLAYHOUSE
ON YOUR RETURN FROM
A TEMPLE VISIT MADE ON
BEHALF OF SIR SEKKO-IN
AND SO INDULGE IN MERRY-
MAKING THERE THAT YOU
DID MOST INSOLENTLY AND
EGREGIOUSLY ARRIVE AT
THE CASTLE PAST THE
SEVENTH HOUR, WHEN
THE GATE IS LOCKED.

THE PUNISHMENT
FOR THIS OFFENSE
SHALL BE YOUR
DISMISSAL, SIR
EIJIMA, AND OF ALL
THE MEN SERVING
IN YOUR CHAMBERS.
THEY SHALL BE
BANISHED FROM THE
INNER CHAMBERS
OF EDO CASTLE
FORTHWITH.





NAY!!

MAY WE
RETURN
TO OUR
CHAMBERS
TO
COLLECT OUR—

B-BY
YOUR
LEAVE!!



NOR MAY YOU
DEPART WITH
YOUR FORMAL
ATTIRE OR
TABI SOCKS
OR SWORDS
UPON YOUR
PERSONS!

GUARDS!
THROW THESE
MEN OUT FROM
THE UNCLEAN
GATE, BAREFOOT
AND CLAD ONLY
IN THEIR
KIMONO!



BE-
GONE,
AT
ONCE!!

AYE, BUT IF
THE SHOGUNATE
DOTH SAY 'TIS
A DISGRACEFUL
BREACH OF THE
CASTLE RULES,
THEN AS SENIOR
CHAMBERLAIN OF THE
INNER CHAMBERS,
THERE IS NOTHING
SIR BJIMA CAN SAY
IN HIS DEFENSE.



AND THE
SAME FOR
RETURNING
AFTER THE
GATE OF THE
SEVENTH HOUR
IS CLOSED—
'TIS ALL BUT
THE CUSTOM!

...THIS
MAY
HAVE
BEEN A
PLOT.



SIR
BJIMA!



HEY,
'TIS SIR
BJIMA!



'TIS TRUE
WE DID STOP
AT THE
PLAYHOUSE ON
OUR RETURN
FROM A TEMPLE
VISIT, BUT
THE MEN IN
SIR TENFEI-NO'S
CHAMBERS
HAVE DONE SO
TOO, TWICE AND
TWICE AGAIN!



...WHAT
IS THE
MEANING
OF THIS?

WHAT
ON
EARTH
COULD
THIS BE
ABOUT?!





STAND
BACK, YE
ALL!!



IKU-
SHIMA
SHIN-
GORO!!

THOU ART
WANTED
FOR
QUESTION-
ING BY THE
MAGISTRATE.
STAY.
MOVE NOT
FROM
THAT
SPOT!!



SHIN-
GORO!!

OH
SHINGORO,
HANDSOME
SIRRRR!!



SIR
EJIMA!!



LET US
MEET
AGAIN
SOON!



OKITSU.
MYAJI.

HAVE
NO FEAR
ON MY
BEHALF.



AYE.

WE KNOW FULL
WELL, WE HAVE
DONE NOTHING
WRONG! NO DOUBT,
THE CHARGES
AGAINST SIR EJIMA
SHALL SOON BE
DROPPED!

AYE.



I SUPPOSE
THAT FOR THE
TIME BEING,
WE MUST GO
TO OUR FAMILY
HOMES AND
AWAIT FURTHER
ORDERS.

SIR
EJIMA...





The
interrogation
methods grew
increasingly
severe.

HERE,
SHINGORO,
KNEELST
THOU DOWN
UPON THIS!



IT IS ALSO
TRUE THAT ONE
TIME, I DID ENJOY
A REPAST WITH
IKUSHIMA SHINGORO
AFTER THE PLAY
WAS O'ER.

IT IS TRUE
THAT ON MY
RETURN FROM A
TEMPLE VISIT FOR
MY MASTER SIR
SEKKO-IN, I DID
STOP SEVERAL
TIMES AT THE
YAMANURA-ZA
THEATER.

NAY,
MY
LORD,
I DID
NOT.

BUT NEVER,
NOT ONCE, HAVE
I HAD AMOROUS
RELATIONS WITH
HER, OF ANY KIND.
YOUR ACCUSATION
IS BASELESS!



I HAVE
TOLD YOU SO,
OVER AND
OVER AGAIN!!
SIR BJUMA
AND I HAD NO
RELATIONS, I
SWEART!!



THEN
CONFESS!
THOU DIDST
HAVE AMOROUS
RELATIONS
WITH BJUMA,
DIDST THOU?!



P-P-P...
PRAY,
NOT...!!
I PRAY
YOU...!!

...!!



AM I
CORRECT IN
ASSUMING
THAT YOU ARE
A RATHER
TOUGH
GENTLEMAN?



IS
THAT
SO, SIR
BJUMA.



THOU
...!



THOU
DIDST
FORNIGATE
WITH
BJIMA,
DIDST
THOU?

SHIN-
GORO.



GYAAA-
AAAAA-
AGH!!

thunk



...THAT
I DID
FORNIGATE
WITH SIR
BJIMA,
AYE....!!



I
CONFESS...



AGH!!
ANGH!!

A-
AYE,
I
DID!!



SET
IT ON
HER!!

IF THAT WEREN'T
THE TRUTH, I
WOULD HAVE
CONFERRED LONG
BEFORE THIS,
UNDER THE WHIP!!
I BEG YOU TO
BELIEVE ME!! I
RESECH YOU....!!



SHINGORO.

THOU DIDST
FORNIGATE WITH
BJIMA, SENIOR
CHAMBERLAIN
OF THE INNER
CHAMBERS,
CORRECT?

!!!



thunk



ANOTHER
ONE.



I AM AN ACTOR!
IF MY LEGS BE
RUINED, I SHALL
NEVER STAND
ON THE STAGE
AGAIN!! I BEG
YOU, PLEASE,
NO MORE!!

PRITHER,
YOUR
WORSHIP,
I PRAY
YOU!! NO
MORE!!



WITH RESPECT, BARON OF TANBA, IN THE HANGING TORTURE ALL THE WEIGHT OF THE BODY IS TAKEN BY THE ARMS AND SHOULDERS, AND THE PAIN IS SO GREAT THAT, EVEN WITHOUT THE SCOURGE, BLOOD AND OILY SWEAT BURST OUT FROM THE BODY.

FOR THIS REASON, THE CRIMINAL BOTH DIE IF THE TORTURE BE CARRIED OUT FOR MORE THAN ONE HOUR OF THE CLOCK. T'IS A PITTY INDEED THAT THIS TORTURE CANNOT BE CONDUCTED FOR LONGER SPANS OF TIME...

Whap
Whap
Whap

BARON OF NOTO. THE MAN IS UNCOMMONLY LARGE AND BURLY. SHOULD THEY NOT LASH HIM HARDER?

Whap



I DID HEAR IT WITH MINE OWN EARS, SHINGORO.

VERY WELL...

REMOVE THE SLABS.



WHIP HIM AGAIN.



FOOLISH WENCH...

SHE DOTH BELIEVE SHE CAN RETURN TO THE STAGE!



WHY, 'TIS THIS—
THAT SHINGORO
WAS TRYING
WITH NONE OTHER
THAN SIR EJIMA,
THE SENIOR
CHAMBERLAIN
OF THE INNER
CHAMBERS OF
EDO CASTLE! AY,
FORSOOTH!



HEAR YE, HEAR
YE! GATHER
ROUND, GATHER
ROUND! WHO
DOETH WISH
TO KNOW
WHEREFORE
IKUSHIMA
SHINGORO WAS
DRAGGED OFF
THE STAGE
T'OTHER DAY?!

SIR EJIMA DOETH STILL
REMAIN UNDER INQUISITION,
BUT SHINGORO HATH
CONFERRED AND HER
PENALTY IS BANISHMENT
TO A DISTANT ISLE! THE
YAMAMURA-ZA IS TO BE
CLOSED DOWN, AND MORE
THAN A THOUSAND OTHERS,
INCLUDING MEN OF THE
INNER CHAMBERS, HAVE
BEEN PUNISHED FOR THEIR
INVOLVEMENT IN
THE SCANDAL!

'TIS INDEED THE
FIRST TIME SUCH
A THING HATH
HAPPENED IN
THE HISTORY OF
THE OKU!

NOW, BUY
MY GAZETTE
IF YE WISH
TO KNOW
MORE!

I'LL
TAKE
ONE!

WONDER WHAT
SORT OF MAN
THIS SIR EJIMA
IS, THAT HE WAS
ABLE TO CAPTURE
THE HEART OF A
GREAT BEAUTY
LIKE IKUSHIMA
SHINGORO...



HO, LOOK WHAT IT
DOETH SAY! SIR EJIMA
DID CONCEAL SHINGORO
IN A LONG WOODEN
CHEST TO GET HER
INSIDE THE INNER
CHAMBERS OF EDO
CASTLE FOR THEIR
NIGHTS OF LOVE!



DO YOU KNOW
ANYTHING
ABOUT THE
ILLICIT AMOROUS
RELATIONS
BETWEEN SIR
GEKKO-IN AND
MANABE AKIFUSA,
BARON OF
ECHIZEN?

SO THAT IS
YOUR TRUE
PURPOSE....!!

IF YOU WILL
TELL ME ALL YOU
KNOW ABOUT
THAT MATTER, I
WILL WITHDRAW
THE CHARGES
AGAINST YOU
AND IKUSHIMA.







TIS A
PLOT!

THIS CENSOR,
OKAMURA SO-
AND-SO, IS
MOST CERTAINLY
IN THE POCKET
OF THESE VERY
GRONES....!!



WE HAVE
RECEIVED NO
COMPLAINTS
ABOUT THE MEN
SERVING SIR
TEN'EI-IN.

I HAVE
HEARD THAT
THEY ARE FAR
MORE BRAZEN
IN THEIR
MERRYMAKING
THAN SIR
BJIMA AND HIS
ATTENDANTS!

BUT IF STOPPING
AT A PLAYHOUSE ON
THE WAY BACK FROM
A TEMPLE VISIT BE
SO REPREHENSIBLE,
WHEREFORE DO YOU
NOT ARREST AND
PUNISH MEN FROM
OTHER CHAMBERS,
SUCH AS THAT OF
SIR TEN'EI-IN?!



...I
SUPPOSE
THERE
IS NO
CHOICE.

AYE,
THAT HE
MIGHT.

IF WE
SHOULD
TORMENT
HIM
FURTHER,
HE
MIGHT...

...HE
WILL NOT
CONFESS,
EVEN WHEN
DENIED
SLEEP FOR
DAYS.



AYE, I
BLUSH
WITH
SHAME
EVEN TO
SPEAK
OF IT!

IN CONTRAST TO
WHICH, SIR BJIMA
AND HIS RETINUE...
WELL, WE DID RECEIVE
A COMPLAINT FROM
AN OFFICIAL CENSOR,
A WOMAN BY THE
NAME OF OKAMURA
GORCEMON.

SHE DID REPORT
OUTRAGEOUS
HORSEPLAY AMONG THE
BJIMA PARTY DURING
THE COURSE OF THE
PERFORMANCE, WHILE
THE COMPORTMENT OF
SIR BJIMA HIMSELF...
FLIRTING WITH IKUSHIMA
SHINSORO IN HIS BOX AS
THOUGH NOBODY WAS
THERE TO SEE...



OH, UM, SIR
GEKKO-IN!
W-WHITHER
DO YOU
GO...?!



I AM
PAYING
A VISIT
TO THE
CHAMBERS
OF SIR
TENGE-IN.



WHAT IS'T,
SIR GEKKO-IN,
THAT GIVETH
ME THIS MOST
UNUSUAL
PLEASURE? A
PRIVATE VISIT
FROM YOU!



SO, TO THE
VERY LAST,
I COULD NOT
INDUCE YOU
TO ASSENT.



I DO
REGRET
IT...



The next day,
Ejima was
sentenced
to death.





IF I WERE TO
TELL THE CABINET
MINISTERS OF THE
SHOGUNATE THAT I
DID CHANGE MY WAY
OF THINKING AND DO
NOW SUPPORT LORD
TOKUGAWA YOSHIMUNE
AS THE NEXT SHOGUN—
WOULD THAT SPARE
BJIMA FROM DEATH?!



PRAY
TELL ME
WHAT I MAY
DO TO SAVE
BJIMA'S
LIFE!

SIR
TENFEI-IN,
YOUR
GRACE.



I AM SIMPLY
THE DOWAGER
CONSORT,
LIVING IN QUIET
RETIREMENT.
YOU KNOW
I HAVE NO
INFLUENCE
HERE...

I KNOW
NOT WHAT
TO SAY.
WHEREFORE
DO YOU
COME
TO ME?

...
SIR
DEKKO-
IN.



IF YOU DO
THAT, IT'LL
SURELY LEAD
ERE LONG TO
THE DOWNFALL
OF BARON
MANABE OF
ECHZEN.

...
CAN YOU
ACCEPT
THAT?



PLEASE,
YOUR
GRACE!!

I WILL DO
ANYTHING
IF IT WILL
SPARE
BJIMA'S
LIFE,
ANYTHING!

I
BESECH
YOU,
KIND
SIR!



AND I HUMBL
ENTREAT YOU
ONCE AGAIN, GOOD
SIR TEN'EI-IN, ON
BEHALF OF EJIMA.
I IMPORTUNE YOU,
PLEASE....!!

I
THANK
YOU
...!!

I
THANK
YOU MOST
GRATEFULLY
FOR THIS
KINDNESS!



...IF YOU SAY
THAT YOU SHALL
RECOMMEND LORD
TOKUGAWA YOSHIMUNE
AS THE NEXT SHOGUN,
I CAN DO ONE THING
FOR THE BARON OF
EGHLEN, AND THAT IS
TO PLEAD WITH LORD
YOSHIMUNE ON HER
BEHALF, THAT SHE
DO NOT LOSE
HER FIEF.



...YOU
ARE
GROWN
QUITE
GALNT.



Ejima's sentence
was commuted
to lifelong
banishment to
Takato in Shinano
Province (present-
day Nagano
Prefecture).



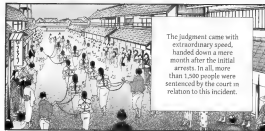
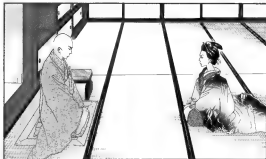
OH...

THE MOST
I CAN DO
FOR HER IS
TO PROTECT
HER LORDLY
RANK AND
FIEFDOM.

THAT IS
GOOD
ENOUGH?



YOU DO UNDER-
STAND, DON'T YOU?
NOW THAT IT WITH
COME TO THIS, THE
BARON OF EGHLEN
CAN NO LONGER
REMAIN IN THE HALLS
OF POWER, HERE
IN EDO. SHE SHALL
SURELY LOSE HER
POSITION IN THE
SHOGUNATE...





HAVE NO
ANXIETY
ON MY
BEHALF,
SIR
BEKKO-IN.

...
LADY
MANABE...



NEVER FEAR.
I SHAN'T
ALLOW THIS
RUSTIC WHO
KNOWETH
NOTHING BUT
THE HINTER-
LANDS OF
KII TO COME
HERE AND
DO AS SHE
PLEASE!

NOT EVEN THE
GREAT LORD
TENOBU WAS ABLE
TO REMOVE FROM
OFFICE THE SENIOR
COUNCILLORS THAT
SERVED UNDER
HER PREDECESSOR,
THE FIFTH SHOGUN
TSUNAYOSHI.

ADD TO THIS THE
CONSIDERATION
THAT LORD
YOSHIMUNE IS A
MERE GIRL OF
TWENTY YEARS
OR SO...



'TWAS IN
MY STEAD
THAT S-JIMA
WAS MADE
THIS VICTIM OF
SACRIFICE...!!



I BES YOUR
FORGIVENESS,
LADY MANABE.

I CAN ONLY
IMAGINE WHAT
HUMILIATIONS
YOU AND
MISTRESS
ARAI MAKUSEKI
MUST ENDURE
IN THE OUTER
CHAMBERS,
DUE TO MY
INADEQUACY...

AND
POOR
S-JIMA...



I
UNDERSTAND
IT WELL.

INDEED, I
AM CERTAIN
THAT S-JIMA
IS PROUD AND
HAPPY THAT
HE COULD
DEFEND HIS
MASTER TO
THE LAST.

...
WITH
REGARD TO
THE LAST,
I DOUBT
S-JIMA DOETH
HARBOR ANY
BITTERNESS
TOWARDS
YOU.





...AND SO, SENIOR CHAMBERLAIN EJIMA DID HAVE HIS SENTENCE OF DEATH COMMUTED TO ETERNAL BANISHMENT, AND WAS SENT TO TAKATO IN SHINANO PROVINCE FOR THAT PURPOSE.



Y... AYE, I DO HAVE AN IDEA OF WHO IS THE MOST LIKELY TO BE NAMED.

SIR MURASE, I WONDER WHO WILL BE NAMED TO FILL THE POSITION OF SENIOR CHAMBERLAIN. HAVE YOU ANY IDEA?



IF I AM RIGHT, IT WILL BE THE MOST PEEPLING SENIOR CHAMBERLAIN EVER TO RULE THE INNER CHAMBERS IN ALL ITS HISTORY.



AND THOU? IN WHICH OF THE INNER CHAMBERS WILT THOU BE?

IN THE CHAMBER OF THE ROBES.

HA HA! SO THOU WILT BE A SEMPSTER, HOLDING A NEEDLE ALL DAY!



SO BE IT. I AM WILLING TO DO ANYTHING, IF IT BE FOR MY WORK.



SABU-ROZA.



AYE, 'TIS NOW MY TURN TO BE TRAPPED IN THE CLOSE CONFINES OF THE INNER CHAMBERS. YOUR FIVE YEARS THERE MUST HAVE FELT AN ETERNITY, SIR MIYAJI.

MY WORK IS DONE. I LEAVE IT TO THEE NOW TO DEFEND THE INTERESTS OF LORD YOSHIMUNE HERE.



QUIT THE "SIR MIYAJI," HENCEFORTH I'M YASUKE THE SCOUT ONCE MORE. FOR THE NONCE, I SHALL LEAVE EDO TO COOL MY HEELS UNTIL THIS STORM BATH BLOWN OVER.



BOTH GEKKO-IN AND E-JIMA ARE FAR TOO PURE OF HEART TO THRIVE IN A PLACE SUCH AS THIS.

THAT GEKKO-IN DID PERCEIVE FULL WELL THAT I WAS THE PLOTTER WHO CONSPIRED TO BRING HIM DOWN AND YET, HE CAME TO BOSS DOWN AND BEG A FAVOR OF ME...



HAD HE BEEN A MALICIOUS AND CRAFTY FELLOW, I WOULD HAVE ENJOYED MY TRIUMPH. I WOULD HAVE BASKED IN IT.

THERE'S NO PLEASURE IN IT.

INSTEAD, I'VE EVEN PROMISED TO DO MY JOB AN UNNECESSARY KINDNESS.

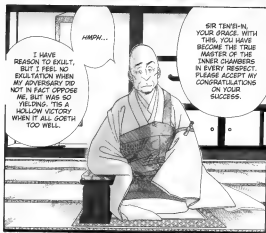


LORD YOSHIMUNE HATH NO OBJECTION TO LETTING THE BARON OF SCHIZEN RETAIN A RIEF, FOR THE BARON IS NOT MY LORD'S ENEMY AFTER ALL.

'TIS NO MATTER, SIR TEN'E-IN.



With the downfall of E-jima, Fujinami assumed the post of Senior Chamberlain.



HMPH...

I HAVE REASON TO EXULT, BUT I FEEL NO EXULTATION WHEN MY ADVERSARY DID NOT IN FACT OPPOSE ME, BUT WAS SO YIELDING. 'TIS A HOLLOW VICTORY WHEN IT ALL GOETH TOO WELL.

SIR TEN'E-IN, YOUR GRACE, WITH THIS, YOU HAVE BECOME THE TRUE MASTER OF THE INNER CHAMBERS IN EVERY RESPECT. PLEASE ACCEPT MY CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR SUCCESS.



I BEG
OF YOU
JUST
ONE
THING.

LORD
HISAWACHI.

MY LATE LORD
TENGBU DID PERISH
ERE SHE WAS ABLE TO
CARRY OUT MANY OF THE
POLITICAL REFORMS SHE DID
INITIATE.... I WISH YOU TO
KNOW THAT MY SUPPORT
FOR LORD YOSHIMUNE
WAS FOUNDED UPON THE
CERTAINTY THAT SHE
WOULD CONTINUE UPON
THAT SAME PATH.



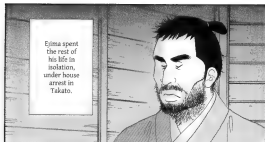
YOU HAVE
MY FIRM
PROMISE OF
THAT, SIR
TEN'EI-IN.

AYE,
CERTAINLY,
YOUR
GRACE.



WE ARE TRULY
GRATEFUL
TO YOU, SIR
TEN'EI-IN, FOR
ALL THAT YOU
HAVE DONE FOR
THE BENEFIT OF
OUR CAUSE.

ON BEHALF
OF OUR LORD
YOSHIMUNE, I,
KANO HISAWACHI,
BARON OF TOTOMI,
DO SINCERELY
THANK YOUR
GRACE FOR YOUR
SUPPORT.





A MOST
SPLENDID
PERSONAGE
INDEED.

AYE,
VERILY.



The year after Ejima's death, Ikushima Shingoro returned to Edo. However, she is said to have died almost immediately afterward in a shabby corner of the capital.



He died
quietly
in Takato
following
twenty-eight
years of
confinement
there.



It is
said that
all who
encountered
Ejima in
Takato were
impressed
by his
excellent
character.

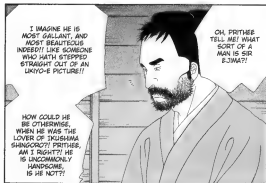


OOOOOH!!
SO IT *IS!*
THIS IS THE
ABODE OF
SIR EJIMA!!

HO! SO
THOU
KNOWEST
ABOUT
THAT,
DOST
THOU?

SAKA-
SHITA!

"ON MY FAITH!!
I THOUGHT MAYHAP
WE'D CHANCE TO
PASS NEAR IT, FOR
TO HEARD HE WAS
BANNED TO TAKATO.
OH, 'TWAS A BIG
SCANDAL IN EDO, IT
WAS. PEOPLE DID
TALK OF NOTHING
ELSE FOR SOME TIME!



I IMAGINE HE IS
MOST GALLANT, AND
MOST BEAUTEFOL
INDEED!! LIKE SOMEONE
WHO HATH STEPPED
STRAIGHT OUT OF AN
UKIYO-E PICTURE!!

OH, PRITHEE
TELL ME! WHAT
SORT OF A
MAN IS SIR
EJIMA?!

HOW COULD HE
BE OTHERWISE,
WHEN HE WAS THE
LOVER OF IKUSHIMA
SHINGORO? PRITHEE,
AM I RIGHT? HE
IS UNCOMMONLY
HANDSOME,
IS HE NOT?!



HE IS A
BRAVE AND
NOBLE
MAN.

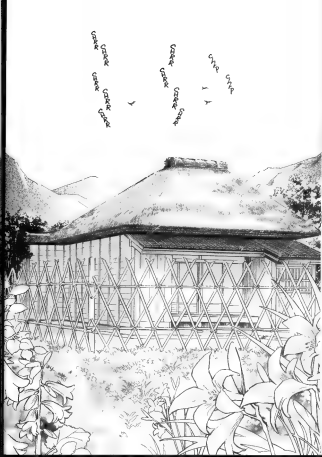
FIE, LASS!
THOU DOST
OVERSTEP THE
BOUNDS OF—

Ooku

● THE INNER CHAMBERS

by Kazuo Koike

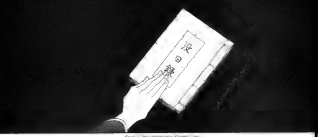
Illustrated by Tetsu



Ōoku

● THE INNER CHAMBERS

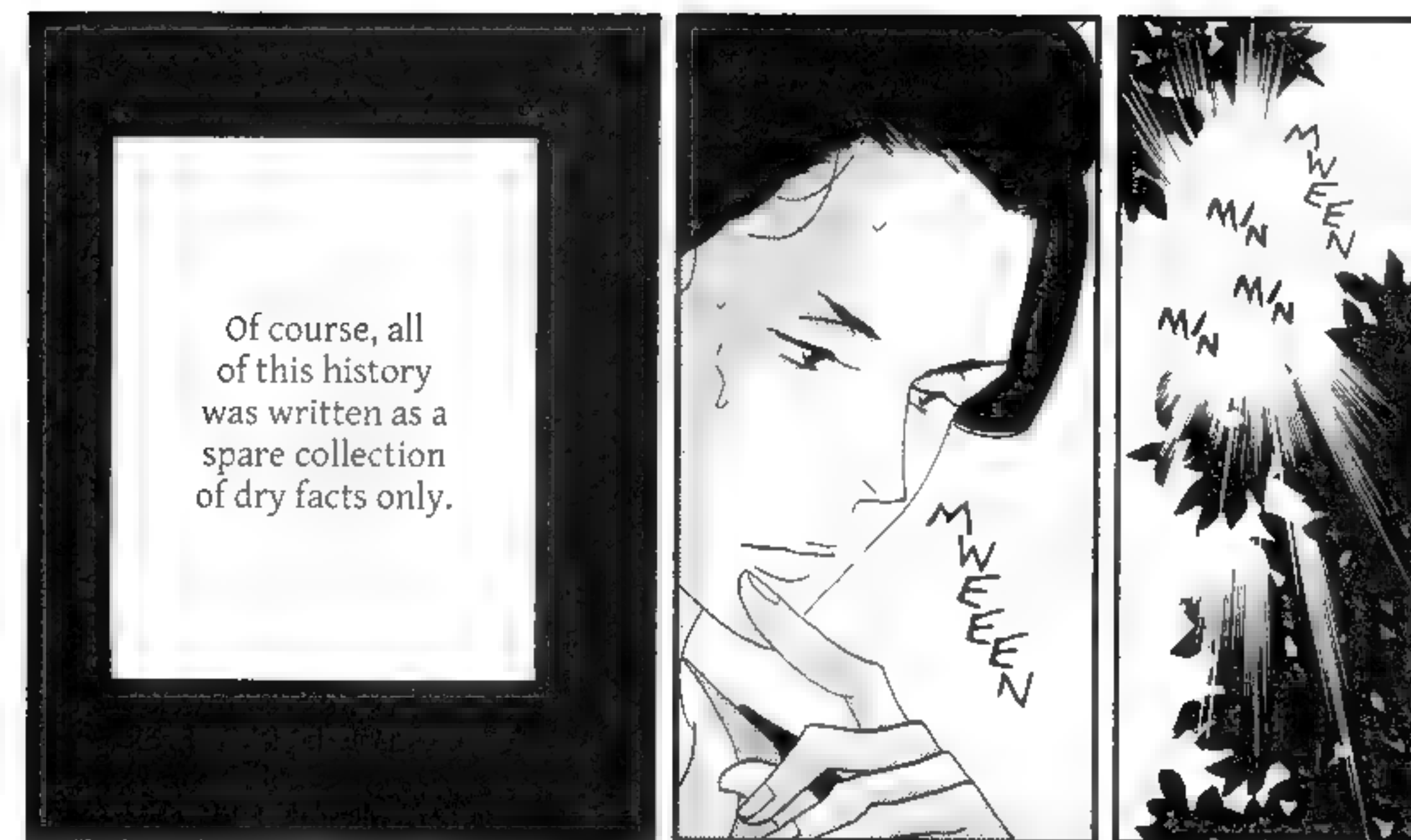
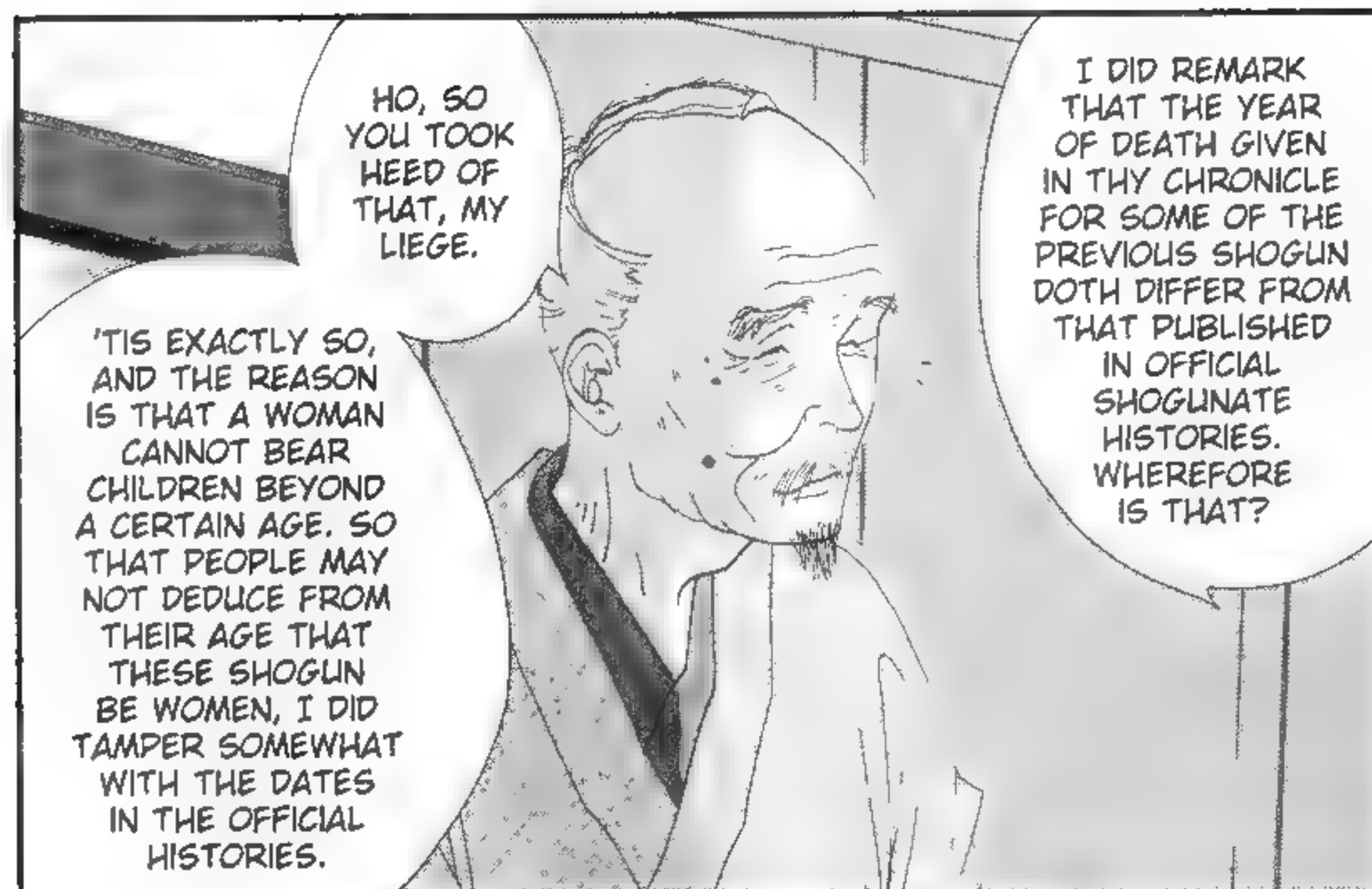


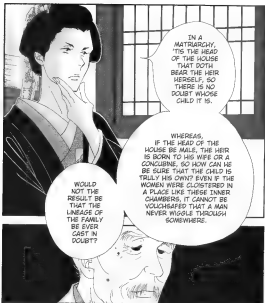


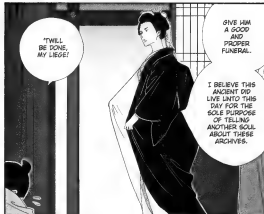
Ooku

THE INNER CHAMBERS

by KAZUO YAMAGUCHI















OF COURSE
HER HIGHNESS
HATH NOT THE
EXPECTATION
THAT 'T'WILL
BE ACHIEVED
IN A DAY.

ALL THE SAME,
THE REDFACE POX
IS A TERRIBLE
PESTILENCE THAT
DOETH AFFLICT
OUR LAND...
LORD YOSHIMUNE
DOETH BELIEVE
THAT, WITHOUT
CONSIDERING THIS
CONTAGION, THIS
NATION CANNOT
PROSPER.



...!!



IF THE
DEAD MAN
HATH NO KIN,
NO HOME, AND
NOBODY TO BURY
HIM—ONLY IF ALL
THESE CONDITIONS
APPLY, THEN I
GRANT YOU SUCH
PERMISSION.

NEVER
FORGET THAT
OUR LIEGE DID
SELECT YOU
FOR THIS MOST
IMPORTANT
DUTY BECAUSE
OF THE APTITUDE
YOU DID SHOW.
ENDEAVOR TO
FULFILL YOUR
FUNCTIONS TO
THE UTMOST!



UH...

...LORD
MAGIS-
TRATE, YOUR
HONOR.

MIGHT
WE GET
PERMISSION TO
DISSECT THE
CADAVERS OF
THOSE WHO
DIED OF THE
REDFACE POX?



AS FOR
PHYSICIANS TO
PLACE THERE,
IN ADDITION TO
THE PROPOSER
OGAWA SHOSHEN,
I MEAN TO
SELECT FROM
THOSE IN THE
SHOGUNATE'S
EMPLOY THE
MOST PROMISING
YOUNG ONES.

AM.

THE CITIZENS
WILL BE SO HAPPY
TO HAVE AN
INFIRMARY WHERE
THE SICK ARE
TREATED FREE
OF CHARGE!



CERTAINLY,
IT GOETH WITHOUT
SAYING THAT THE
FIRST AND FOREMOST
PRINCIPLE IS TO
TREAT THE AILMENTS
OF THE POOR WITH
GREAT CARE AND
ATTENTIVENESS.



THAT IS TO
STRIVE, WITH
THE STRICTEST
SECRECY FROM
THE TOWNSFOLK,
TO ERADICATE THE
REDFACE POX.

HOWEVER, HER
HIGHNESS HATH
CHOSEN THIS
LARGE NUMBER
OF YOUTHFUL
PHYSICIANS TO
SERVE IN THE
NEW HOSPITAL
FOR ANOTHER
VERY IMPORTANT
PURPOSE.



IT DOTH APPEAR
TO BE SO. THE
TOWNSWOMEN SAY
THEY HAVE NO
TIME FORT, BEING
TOO BUSY WITH
HEARTH, TRADE,
AND CHILDREN TO
PUT OUT FIRES
AS WELL.

AYE,
MY LORD...

I
SEE.



NEXT, THE
NEIGHBORHOOD
FIRE BRIGADES
THAT HAVE
BEEN ECHIZEN'S
LONGTIME
OBJECT...

I HEAR
SHE HATH
MUCH
DIFFICULTY
IN GETTING
CITIZENS TO
JOIN THEM.



A FIRE
BRIGADE'S DUTY
IS TO DESTROY THE
HOUSES AROUND THE
BURNING ONE, TO STOP
THE FIRE SPREADING
OVER THE ENTIRE
QUARTER. 'TIS JUST
THE THING FOR BRAVINY
MENFOLK, WHO HAVE NO
OTHER CHANNEL TO USE
THEIR STRENGTH!

HISA-
MACH.

TELL SCHIZEN
IF SHE HATH NOT
ENOUGH WOMEN
TO JOIN THE FIRE
BRIGADES, THAT SHE
MIGHT CALL UPON THE
MEN OF EDO, WHO SIT
IDLE ALL DAY WITH
NOTHING TO DO.



AYE,
MY LORD!



THEY SAY
THAT WHEN IT
FIRST OPENED, 'T WAS
BRUIED IN TOWN THAT
THE HOSPITAL WAS A
FEARFUL PLACE, BUILT
TO TRY THE EFFICACY
OF THE HERBS GROWN
IN THE KOISHIKAWA
MEDICINAL HERB GARDEN
ON THE BODIES OF
THE POOR...



BUT WHEN THE
MAGISTRATE LORD
TADASUKE, BARON OF
ECHIZEN, DID ALLOW THE
TOWNSPEOPLE TO LOOK
AROUND INSIDE THE
INFIRMARY AND SEE THE
PLACE FOR THEMSELVES,
SUCH RUMORS DID
FADE AND NOW, 'TIS
FILLED EVERY DAY WITH
PATIENTS JOYING
TO BE TREATED.

MORE
OR LESS
AS I DID
EXPECT.



The forty-seven fire brigades that were formed—one for every letter of the Japanese syllabary—came to epitomize the verve and panache of Edo men, and gained tremendous support and admiration from the citizens of the capital.



FORSOOTH...
I KNOW BY
NOW THAT
MY SAYING
NAY SHANT
STOP THEE
ANYWAY!

I'D LIKE TO JOIN!
I'WOULD SUIT ME
MUCH BETTER THAN
SITTING ALL DAY IN A
DIM SHOP, COMPUTING
ACCOUNTS ON AN
ABACUS. DOST THOU
NOT AGREE? EH,
O-NOBU?

HO,
O-NOBU! A
NEIGHBOR-
HOOD FIRE
BRIGADE!

ALL RIGHT,
SO LONG AS
THOU DOST ALL
THY REGULAR
WORK HERE IN THE
SHOP, I S'POSE I
CAN LET THEE GO
WHEN THERE
IS A FIRE.



However,
not all of
the policies
instituted by
Yoshimune were
as successful
as the fire
brigades and
hospital.



True to Yoshimune's
conjecture, the men of
Edo, who had nothing
to do other than lie
with women at night,
leapt at the chance to
join the fire brigades.





'TIS NAUGHT!

JUST
LABOR
PAINS.



YOUR
HIGH-
NESS!!

YOUR
HIGH-
NESS?!



'TIS NOT SERIOUS!
THOU DOST KNOW WELL,
HISAMICHI, THAT SINCE
THIS WAS JUST THE
FIRST PAIN, THERE IS
YET MUCH TIME UNTIL
THE CHILD BE BORN. ALL
OF YE HERE, BECALM
YOURSELVES!!

WHAT?!

OH, AY,
YOUR
HIGH-
NESS!!

CALL A
PHYSICIAN!
HER
HIGHNESS
IS IN THE
LABOR OF
BIRTH!!



AT THIS
RATE, NOT
ONLY THE
TRADESMEN
OF EDO REFUSE
TO OPEN THEIR
SHOPS AS WE
WISH, BUT KEEP
THEIR MOREEN
CURTAINS
FOLDED AWAY.

THE MONEY
CHANGERS OF
EDO REFUSE
TO OPEN THEIR
SHOPS AS WE
WISH, BUT KEEP
THEIR MOREEN
CURTAINS
FOLDED AWAY.

YOUR
HIGH-
NESS.



WE
CAN'T
HAVE
IT!!

The moneychangers' strike was the equivalent, in our time, of having every bank in a city close its doors at the same time.

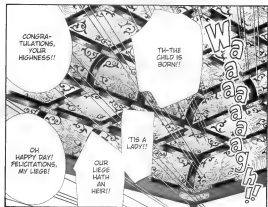


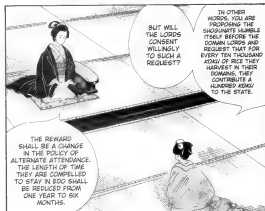
...?! ...
NGH!!

THE
MONEYCHANGERS
MUST BE MADE
TO OPEN THEIR
SHOPS AND SELL
GOLD AT THE RATE
THE SHOGUNATE
HATH FIXED—60
SILVER MONME
TO ONE RYU!!

THE CURRENT MARKET
RATE OF 48 SILVER
MONME FOR ONE GOLD
RYU DOTH TOO HEAVILY
FAVOR SILVER! WITH
SILVER SO OVERVALUED,
THERE IS MORE
GOLD THAN SILVER
CIRCULATING IN EDO, SO
THAT EVEN IN THIS TIME
OF HARDSHIP, THE PRICE
OF GOODS GOETH UP!!









SPEAK
NOT SO MUCH.

AYE,
MY LORD.



Y-Y-YOUR
H-H-
HIGHNESS!!



NAY, NAY,
LIE THEE
BACK
DOWN! 'TIS
BAD FOR
THEE TO
GET UP!

OH, MY LORD! MY
LIEGE! 'TIS AN HONOR
TOO GREAT, FOR ONE
SUCH AS MYSELF!!
TO RECEIVE A VISIT
FROM YOUR HIGHNESS,
FORSOOTH...!!



... 'TIS
LIKE A
DREAM,
A HAPPY
DREAM
...!

AYE...
WHAT A
PRIVILEGE,
TO BE
IN YOUR
PRESENCE
ONCE
AGAIN.



COME,
COME.

GET
WELL
SOON.

THOU
AND I ARE A
COUPLE, ARE WE
NOT? I SHALL
COME TO KISS
THEE MANY A TIME
HENCEFORTH.



I WILL
TAKE THAT
GIFT TO THE
GRAVE WITH
ME, AND
BEYOND...

...



INDEED,
THOU DIDST
USE JUST
THE RIGHT
AMOUNT OF
STRENGTH.
I DID
GRUNT WITH
PLEASURE.

...NAY,
'T'WAS
NOT TOO
HARD AT
ALL.

I-I B-BEG YOUR
FORGIVENESS,
YOUR HIGHNESS, IF
I DID SCRUB YOUR
BACK TOO HARD!!
I WAS MOST
CARELESS!!



OH, YOUR
HIGHNESS! IS
THE WATER NOT
TOO HOT OR
COOL?!

HMP
AYE, THE
WATER
TOO DOTH
FEEL JUST
RIGHT.

Several
days later,
Sir O-Suma,
formerly
Unokuchi,
quietly drew
his last
breath.



...IT DOTH
SEEM THAT I
AM UNABLE TO
SEE INSIDE THE
MANY SMALL
FOLDS OF THE
HUMAN HEART.

AND POOR
UNOKUCHI... I
THOUGHT 'T'WAS
ENOUGH TO LET
HM SEE HIS LITTLE
DAUGHTER, LADY
FUKU. I SHOULD
HAVE GONE TO VISIT
HM SOONER...

BECAUSE I
COULD NOT LOOK
INTO THE MINDS
OF THOSE WHO
BUY AND SELL
FOR A LIVING,
THE MERCHANTS
DID TURN THEIR
BACKS ON ME.



MOREOVER, IF A VALET SHOULD FIND PARTICULAR FAVOR WITH OUR LEGE, 'TIS NOT UNHEARD OF THAT SHE RISE HIGH IN THE RANKS, INDEED TO SO LOFTY A POST AS SENIOR COUNCILLOR IN THE COURSE OF HER CAREER.

'TIS A GREAT, INDEED TREMENDOUS, HONOR TO BE BESTOWED SUCH A GIFT...



WELL, CUSTOM IT MAY BE, BUT I AM AGAINST PARTIALITY. SHOULD I GIVE A ROBE TO ONE VALET OF THE CHAMBER, 'TWILL CAUSE HER TO BE ENVIED BY THE OTHERS AND LEAD TO QUARRELS AMONG THEM.

AH... NOW THAT THOU HAST TOLD ME THIS, I RECALL THEY WERE ALL VERY COMELY.

TWO PERSONAGES THAT DID TRACE THIS VERY ARC WERE LORD YANAGISAWA YOSHIYASU, PRINY COUNCILLOR TO THE FIFTH SHOGUN, LORD TSUNAYOSHI, AND LORD MANABE AKIFUSA, PRINY COUNCILLOR TO THE SIXTH SHOGUN, LORD IENOSU.



SUCH A GIFT FROM YOUR HIGHNESS IS THE GREATEST REWARD THE VALETS OF THE SHOGUN'S QUARTERS COULD RECEIVE, AND A GREAT ENCOURAGEMENT ALSO, THAT WILL MAKE THEM ALL GO ABOUT THEIR DUTIES WITH REDDOUBLED VIGOR.

THEN, INSTEAD OF GIVING YOUR ROBES ALWAYS TO THE SAME ONE, I DARESAY YOU COULD MAKE THE GIFT EACH TIME TO A DIFFERENT VALET IN TURN.



'TWAS A GOOD BATH, YE MAY GO NOW, YOUR DUTIES ARE DONE.

...?



'TWAS A GOOD BATH, YE MAY GO.

...AH.



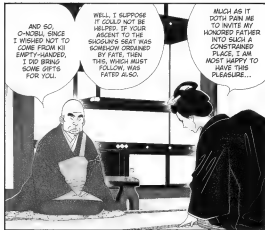
THE REASON FOR THAT IS THEY WERE AWAITING THE GIFT OF THE ROBES YOU DID REMOVE BEFORE YOUR BATH!

YOUR HIGHNESS.



I HAVE HEARD 'TIS THE CUSTOM IN THE SHOGUN'S QUARTERS FOR FAVORED VALETS OF THE CHAMBER TO RECEIVE OUR LEGE'S DISCARDED ROBES.

WHAT DOST THOU MEAN?



AND SO, O-NOBU, SINCE I WISHED NOT TO COME FROM KII EMPTY-HANDED, I DID BRING SOME GIFTS FOR YOU.

WELL, I SUPPOSE IT COULD NOT BE HELPED. IF YOUR ASCENT TO THE SHOGUN'S SEAT WAS SOMEHOW ORDAINED BY FATE, THEN THIS, WHICH MUST FOLLOW, WAS FATED ALSO.

MUCH AS IT DOETH PAIN ME TO INVITE MY HONORED FATHER INTO SUCH A CONSTRAINED PLACE, I AM MOST HAPPY TO HAVE THIS PLEASURE...



'TIS EXACTLY AS YOU SAY!

AND YET, UNTIL THOU DIDST TELL ME SO, I DID NOT THINK OF IT MYSELF. SUCH A SIMPLE, EASY THING AS THAT!

'TIS AS YOU SAY, SUGISHITA.



'TIS ENOUGH THAT YOU SURVEY THE BROAD VISTA ONLY, AND LEAVE THE SMALL MATTERS OF DAILY LIFE TO THOSE OF US FAR BELOW YOU, WHO ARE FAMILIAR WITH SUCH TRIFLES.

THAT IS NO REASON FOR DISMAY, YOUR HIGHNESS.



YE MAY COME IN!



I THOUGHT THAT MEN FROM YOUR OWN DOMAIN MIGHT BE AGREEABLE TO YOU, AND PICKED OUT A FEW THAT I FOUND TO BE WORTHY.

PROSPECTIVE CONCUBINES.



Yoshimune then invited into the Inner Chambers a person she had long wished to send for.



WHAT
IS THY
VIEW?



Book: Chronicle of a Dying Day

I HAVE
HEARD TELL
THAT ONLY MEN,
OR WOMEN
IN WHITE
ROBES, MAY
CROSS ONTO
THE ISLAND
OF DEJIMA
IN NAGASAKI.



I KNOW
NOT,
YET...



AYE, MOST
CERTAINLY,
MY LORD.
I DO
SOLENNLY
PROMISE
MY
SILENCE.

INDEED.

IF WHAT IS
RECORDED IN THESE
CHRONICLES BE
TRUE, MEN OUGHT
NOT BE DEPRIVED
OF WORK. A RARE
PLACE LIKE THESE
INNER CHAMBERS
WHERE MEN STILL
WORK MUST BE
PRESERVED.

Yoshimune
would
later name
Koniwama to
the post of
Chief Scribe.

KONIYAMA
KAGEYU. LET THOU
BE WELL AWARE THAT
THESE ANNALS ARE
SECRET DOCUMENTS.
SPEAK NOT OF
THEIR CONTENTS
TO ANYBODY...



HONORED
FATHER,
IF I MAY
ASK YOUR
REASONS
FOR FINDING
THESE MEN
WORTHY?

How?
Why?



VERY
WELL.

FROM WHAT
I HAVE SEEN,
MEN WHO
EAT SPEEDILY
ARE HARD
WORKERS.

AYE. THEY
ALL ARE
STURDY OF
BODY AND
DEVOUR
THEIR FOOD
RAPIDLY.

HONORED
FATHER, IF I
MAY ASK YOU
SOMETHING
ELSE—IS ANY
MAN OF THESE
A SKILLED
CALLIGRAPHER?



A CALLI-
GRAPHER
...?



I MIGHT HAVE GUESSED, 'TIS ANOTHER ONE OF THE SWAINS FROM KYU PROVINCE. HER HIGHNESS IS GIVING EACH OF THEM A TURN IN HER BEDCHAMBER.

THY NAME?

MY NAME IS TAKEMOTO, MY LIEGE.



That corner was the place Hirakaka sat in.

Yoshimune took care to treat her concubines as equitably as she could.

'TIS WAS THE LAST ONE. ON THE MORROW I START AGAIN, WITH HIRAKAKA.



PRAY, YOUR HIGHNESS...! 'TIS AN AWFUL JEST.

THOU DOST WELL COMPREHEND—HAD THE WORLD REMAINED AS IT SHOULD, THOU MIGHT HAVE BEEN SHOGLIN, AND I THY SERVANT.



BOW YE DOWN FOR THE ENTRANCE OF OUR LIEGE!!



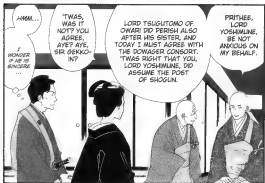
I KNEW
'TWOULD BE
SO. I DID
TRUST MY
JUDGMENT
TO BE
UNERRING.

YOU HAVE NO
SUCH NEED. YOUR
INTRODUCTION OF
RICE CONTRIBUTIONS
HATH BROUGHT MUCH
GOLD INTO THE EMPTY
COFFERS OF THE
SHOGUNATE, AND NOW
ALL THE TALK IS OF
YOUR PROWESS
AS A LEADER.

COME,
COME,
MY LORD.



OH...



AMMM...

'T'WAS,
WAS IT
NOT? YOU
AGREE,
AYE? AYE,
SIR GEKKO-
IN?

LORD TSUGUTOMO OF
OWARI DID PERISH ALSO
AFTER HIS SISTER, AND
TODAY I MUST AGREE WITH
THE DOWAGER CONSORT.
'T'WAS RIGHT THAT YOU,
LORD YOSHIMUNE, DID
ASSUME THE POST
OF SHOGUN.

PRITHES,
LORD
YOSHIMUNE,
BE NOT
ANXIOUS ON
MY BEHALF.

I
WONDER
IF HE IS
SINCERE
...



WELL,
YOUR GRACE,
ALL I DO IS
GIVE BIRTH TO
THEM. THE
NURSE DOETH DO
THE REST.

'TIS HARD
TO BELIEVE
THAT YOU ARE
ALREADY THE
MOTHER OF
THREE LOVELY
CHILDREN...

TWE
DOETH PASS
MOST
SWIFTLY.

BOTH AS
A MOTHER AND
AS THE SHOGUN,
I AM BUT A MERE
STRUPLING IN NEED OF
WISE COUNSEL, WHICH
I HOPE BOTH YOU, SIR
TEN'E-IN, AND YOU SIR
GEKKO-IN, SHALL
SHARE WITH ME.



AYE, SIR
TEN'EI-N.

'TIS
VERILY
SO...



'TWOULD NOT HAVE
BEEN STRANGE FOR ME
TO BE EXPELLED FROM
THE INNER CHAMBERS
AFTER BACKING LORD
TSUSUTOMO, AND ALSO FOR
MY CONNECTION TO BJWA.
INSTEAD, YOU HAVE EVEN
GIVEN ME THIS PALACE
OF MINE OWN IN THE
GARDEN OF FLUJAGE...

INDEED,
I AM MOST
GRATEFUL TO
YOU, LORD
YOSHIMUNE.



LORD
YOSHI-
MUNE...



IT MAY
BE THAT
MY LORD
YOSHIMUNE
IS AS
AMOROUS
AND LUSTFUL
AS LORD
TSUNAYOSHI.

FOR-
SOOTH!



'TIS ONLY
RIGHT AND
PROPER THAT I
HAVE DONE SO,
FOR YOU ARE
THE FATHER OF
THE PREVIOUS
SHOGUN.

LET ME BE
CLEAR--THERE IS
NOT THE SMALLEST
PARTICLE OF ENMITY
IN MY HEART
TOWARDS YOU,
SIR GEKKO-N.



...WITH ONE
WHOM NOBODY
S'ER THOUGHT
WOULD BECOME
THE SUPREME
LEADER OF THIS
LAND, AT THE
TIME OF HER
BIRTH...

SIR GEKKO-N
AND I WERE ONCE
ANTAGONISTS
CONTENDING O'er
WHO WOULD BE
THE NEXT SHOGUN.
NOW HERE WE
SIT IN THE SUN,
ENJOYING TEA
TOGETHER...

HUH...
THE WORLD
IS INDEED A
MARVELOUS
PLACE.



Yoshimune subsequently gave birth to her third daughter, and her future as both mother and shogun seemed assured.



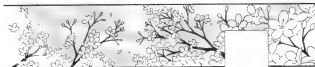
YOUR
HIGH-
NESS.

LADY FUKU'S
COIFFURE
HATH BEEN
COMPLETED.



RAISE
THY HEAD
AND SHOW
ME THY
FACE, LADY
FUKU.

AYE.



However...





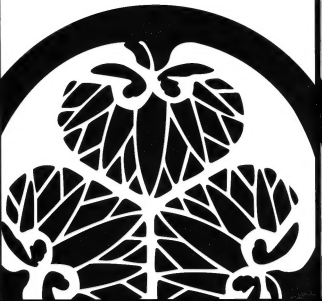
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OOKU: THE INNER CHAMBERS
VOLUME 7 · END NOTES

BY AKEMI WEGMÜLLER



Page 36, panel 2 - YAMAMURA-ZA

Za means "guild" and when attached as a suffix to a name, means "theater" and refers to both the name of the playhouse and the name of the acting troupe or company.

Page 37, panel 2 - FROM MI, FUJI TO TSUKUBA

A line from the opening of the play *Sakuraba*, traditionally sung by star-reflex singers.

Page 37, panel 3 - DANJURO, NARITA-YA

The Kabuki actor here is based on the historic Ichikawa Danjuro I, whose stage nickname (*regal*) was Narita-ya. In Kabuki tradition, the audience calls out the actors' name as *rigo* during favorite scenes.

Page 38, panel 3 - ARAGOTO, KAMIGATA

Aragoto is a part of *arashinagata*, a kabuki style that uses exaggerated, bold movements and costumes. Ichikawa Danjuro I unified *arashinagata* and created the act in which the hero debates the villain, or *aragoto*. *Wagoto*, in contrast to *aragoto*, is the act in which a love affair occurs. During the Edo period, Kamigata was the region where the big cities were located.

Page 41, panel 1 - ZOJO-JI AND KAN'ESHI

These are the two Tokugawa *bedaiji* (family temple and burial grounds.)

Page 61, panel 1 - HOUR OF THE SHEEP

Itomadoki in Japanese. Around two a.m. and two p.m. Also called Eighth Hour of the Afternoon.

Page 98, panel 5 - UKIYO-E

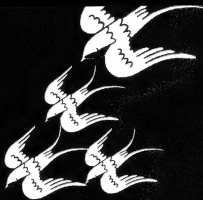
Literally means "pictures of the floating world." A genre of woodblock prints.

Page 138, panel 2 - OFFICIAL CENSOR

Mitsuke were inspectors tasked with investigating corruption and fraud in those below *daimyo* (lord) status. They served a function somewhat similar to modern FBI agents.

Page 211, panel 2 - COIFFURE

This indicates she has come of age and is ready for her hair to be put up in a woman's style. The coiffure ceremony was called *U-goshi* age.



Ōoku

THE INNER CHAMBERS



